

# Section 8 Heads, hands and portraits

## **Guiding Faculty**

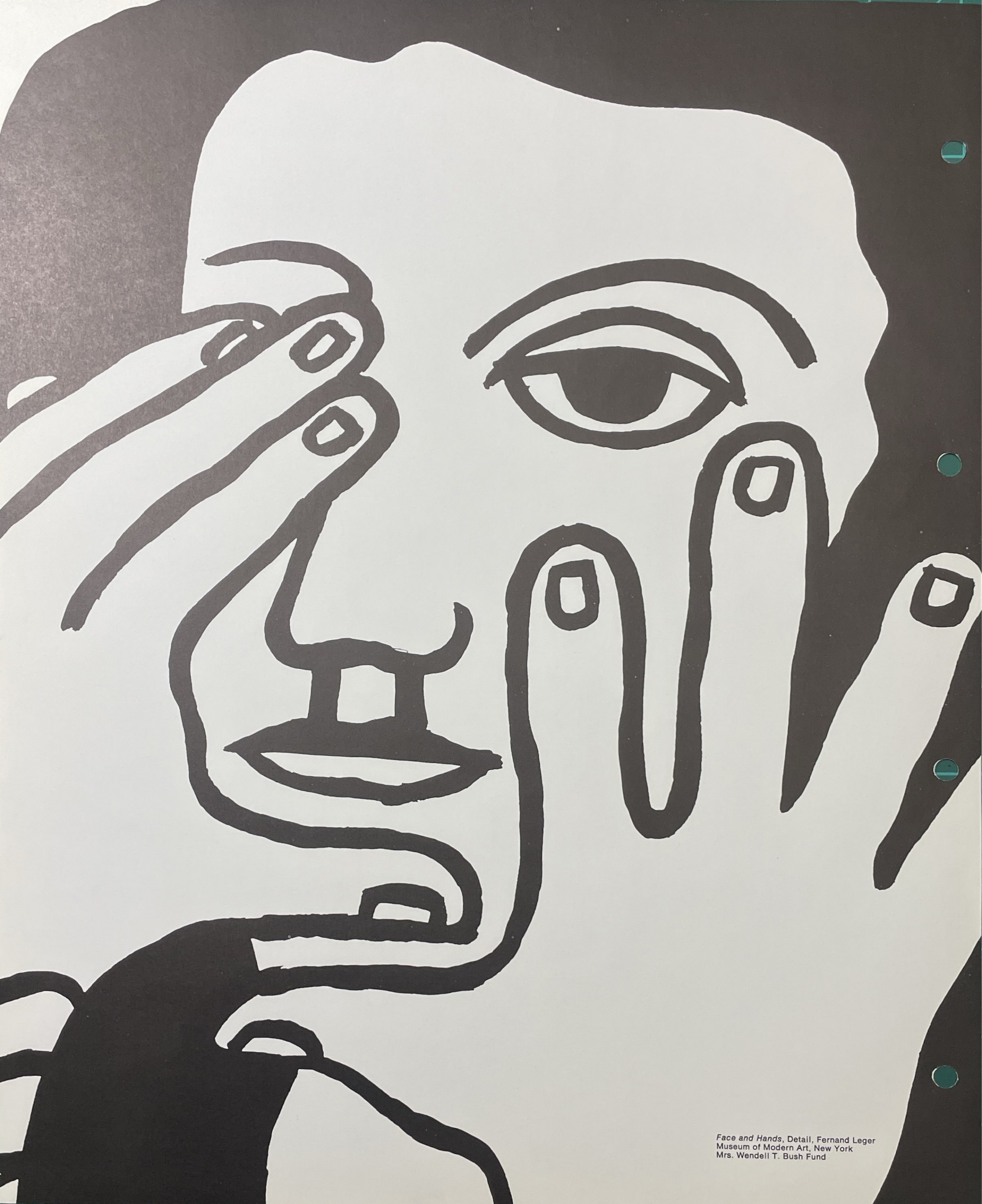
Albert Dorne, Founder  
[1904-1965]

Norman Rockwell  
Al Parker  
Ben Stahl  
Stevan Dohanos  
Jon Whitcomb  
Robert Fawcett  
Peter Helck  
Austin Briggs  
Harold Von Schmidt  
George Giusti  
Fred Ludekens  
Bernard Fuchs  
Bob Peak  
Tom Allen  
Lorraine Fox  
Franklin McMahon

Ben Shahn  
Doris Lee  
Dong Kingman  
Arnold Blanch  
Adolf Dehn  
Fletcher Martin  
Will Barnet  
Syd Solomon  
Julian Levi  
Joseph Hirsch

Milton Caniff  
Al Capp  
Dick Cavalli  
Whitney Darrow, Jr.  
Rube Goldberg  
Harry Haenigsen  
Willard Mullin  
Virgil Partch  
Barney Tobey





Face and Hands, Detail, Fernand Leger  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Mrs. Wendell T. Bush Fund





The hands of Mrs. Andrew Ostermeyer  
From the Collection of the Library of Congress



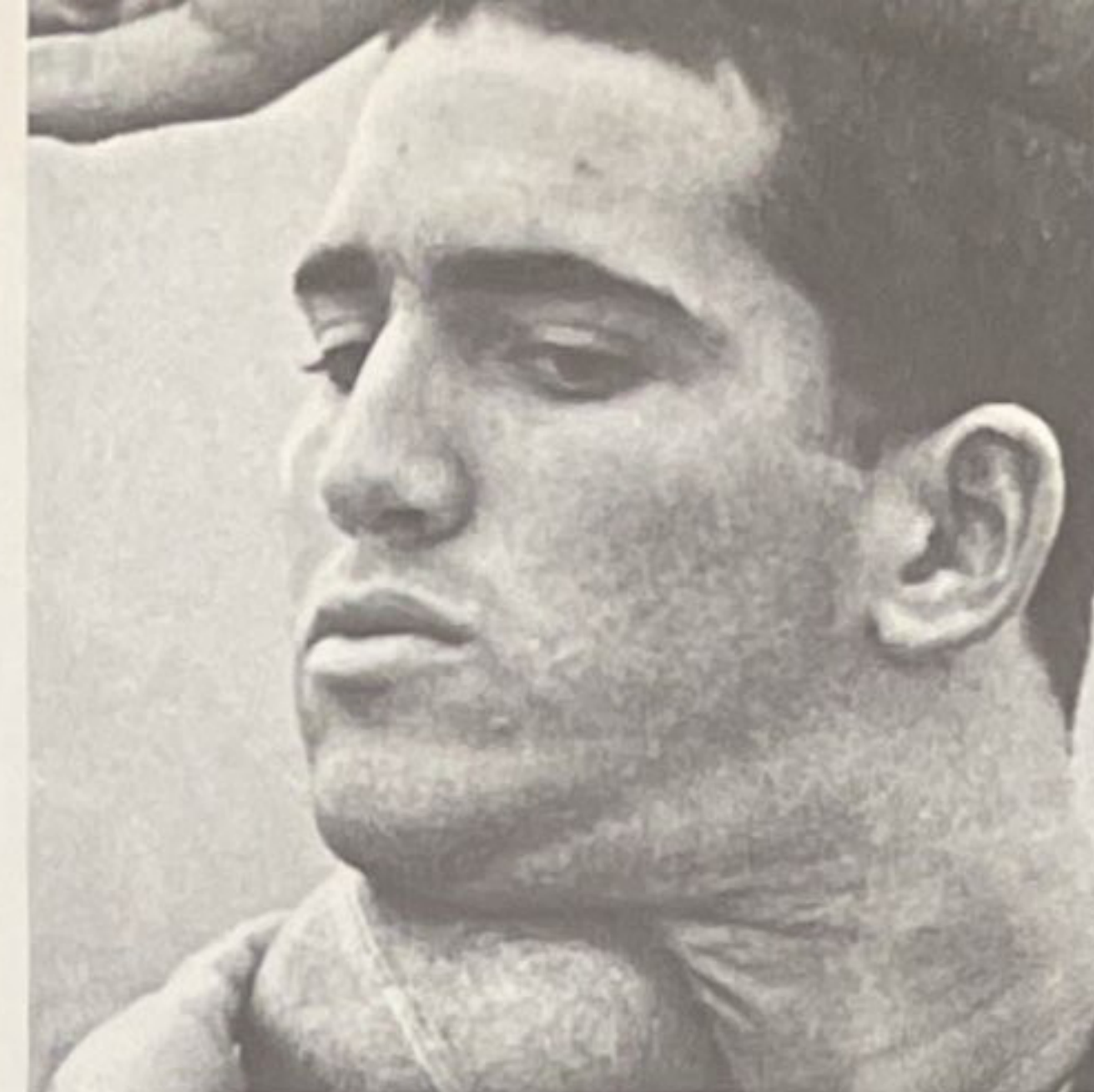
Robert Wykoff



Photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt  
Courtesy *Life* magazine, © Time, Inc.



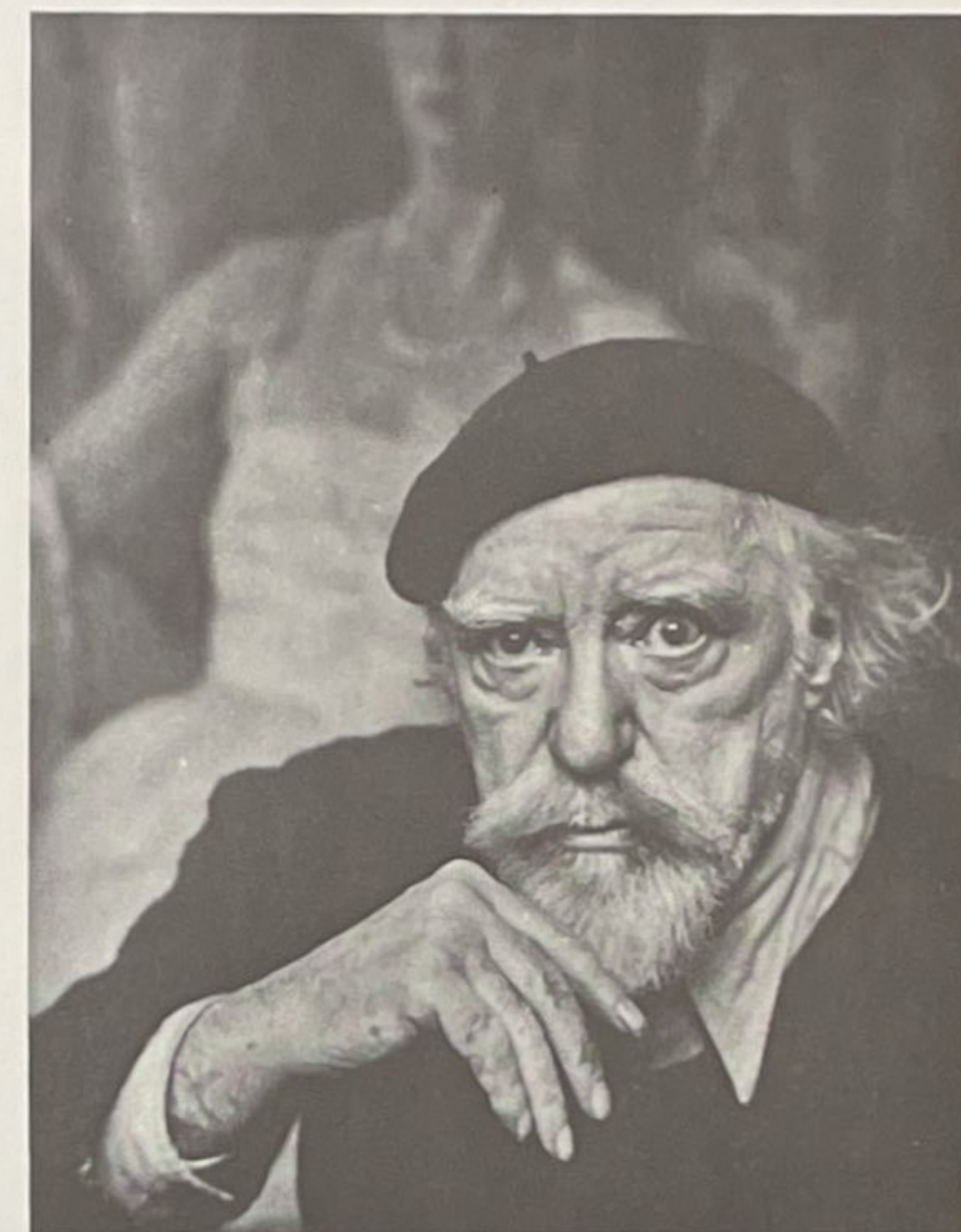
Spanish Man and Child  
Photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson—MAGNUM



Stuart Harris



White Angel Breadline  
Photograph by Dorothea Lange



Photograph of Augustus John by Alfred Eisenstaedt  
Courtesy *Life* magazine, © Time, Inc.



Robert Isaacs

## Drawing heads and hands

You may think it's easy to draw a face. Just put two eyes, a nose and a mouth in their places in proper relation to each other, frame them with hair, and there you have it. Only you probably don't. What you have may be pretty or handsome, but it's likely to be the mask of a face, lifeless as a mannequin. An artist knows that the shape of a face, its planes and features are always unique, not only because each face looks different from all others, but because of what he sees beneath the surface, because of what the face tells him about the person behind it. Whether he paints a likeness of someone he knows or draws a face from his imagination, this uniqueness is what he tries to capture; it is what makes faces real and alive.

Faces are the most expressive part of man. They can speak more eloquently even than words. What can you see in the faces above? They are all very much alive; some are caught in an emotion you've felt in yourself or sensed in someone you know. You can look at them and say, "I know. I've been there, too. I've laughed and I've been lonely, I've been as full of fire as that wonderful old man in the beret, and I've felt afraid to the bottom of my stomach and strong at the same time — like that father shielding his little boy."

If you want to draw faces that live, you have to understand what you see in them first of all. The head is a solid structure that doesn't change, but the features, though they don't move their positions, *can* be molded and changed by the

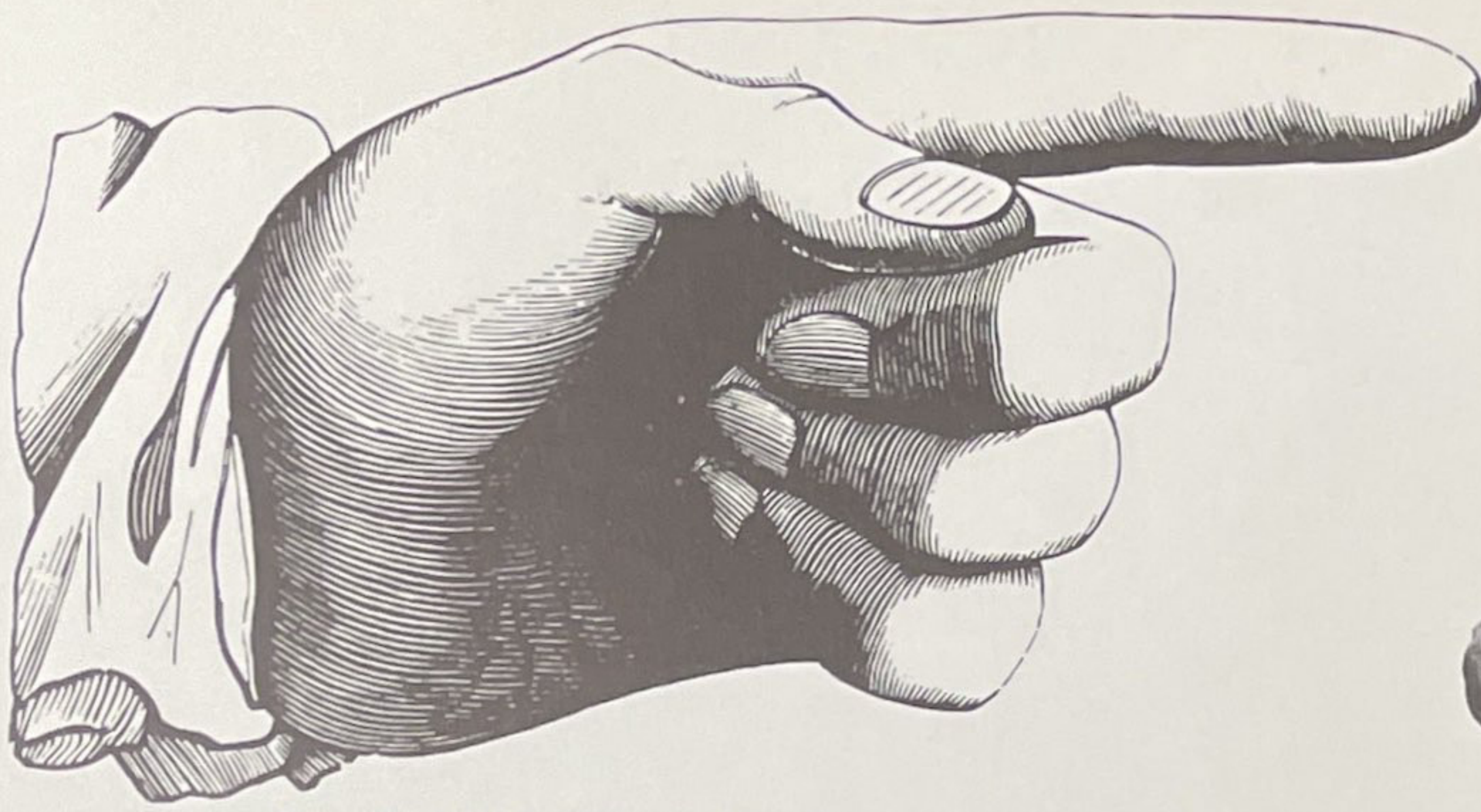
pull of emotions. If you've never noticed this before, look for it now. Watch the faces of the people you know. You'll see what laughter or tears or sudden fright does to a face and how the features change as they compose themselves again. Even the tiniest shift in mood is reflected there, in the eyes, in the tilt of the head, in the line of the mouth.

In drawing faces, don't fall into the trite trap of pairing certain features with certain temperaments. Faces are endlessly interesting for the very reason that facial characteristics come in a never-ending variety of combinations. Thin lips do not always go with a mean disposition, nor do dishonest people necessarily have small beady eyes. Weak chins don't make a weakling any more than granite chins always betray a stubborn iron will. It may be that they do, but you can't count on it. Nature just isn't that predictable.

There's another part of man that, like his face, tells a great deal about him — his hands. One artist has even said, "I insist that the painter should take a hand every bit as seriously as a face and recognize how eloquent it is in its power to tell us what are the intellectual and physical qualities, and even the age, of the person to whom it belongs."

In this section you're going to learn about ways to draw heads and hands expressively. You'll make a head of clay to help you in your seeing as well as your drawing. You'll paint a portrait in oils. And you'll make some sketches of the one person who's always anxious to sit for you — yourself.

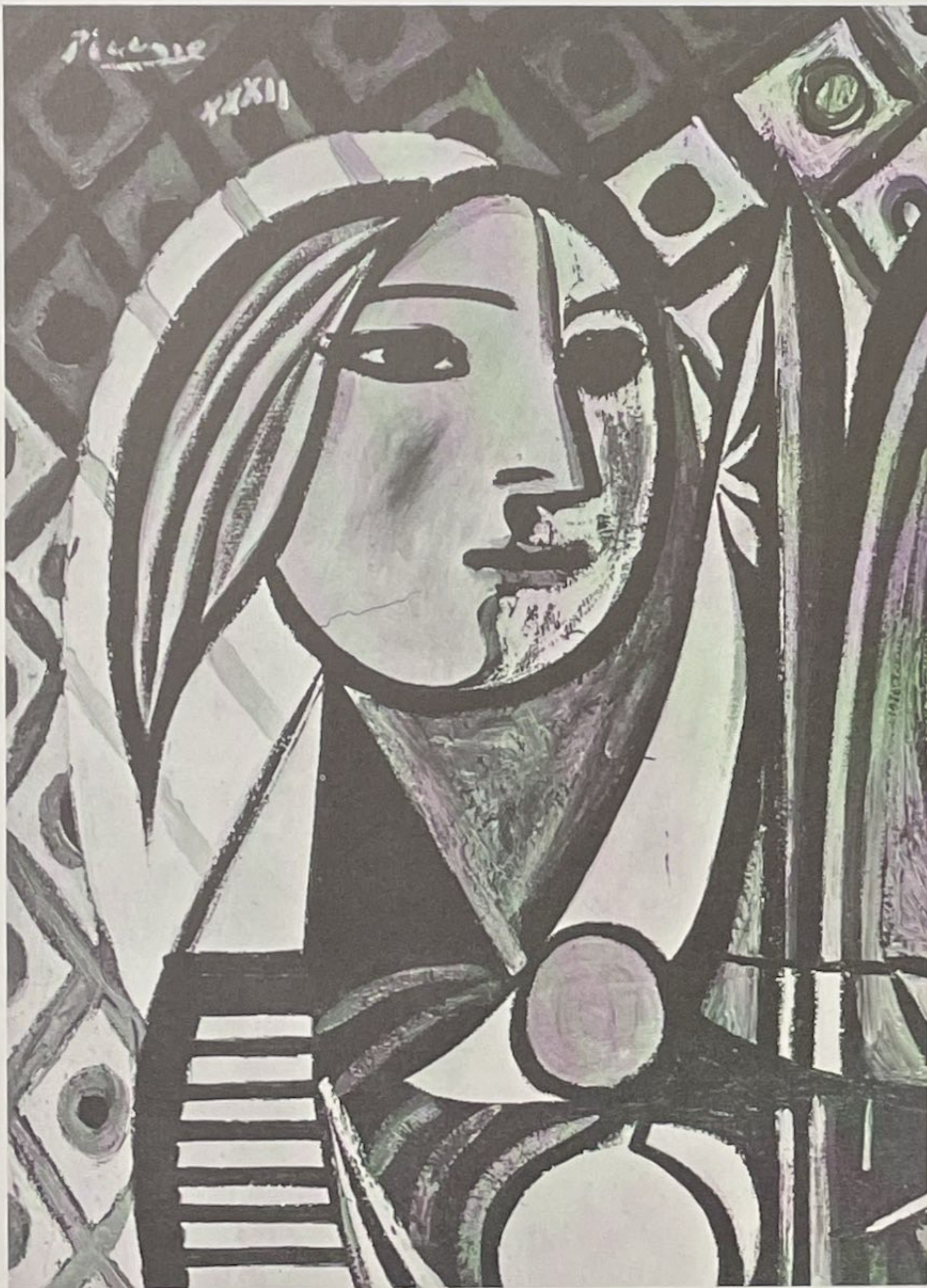




Nineteenth-century engraving, American



Symbol of an eye (trademark for CBS television)

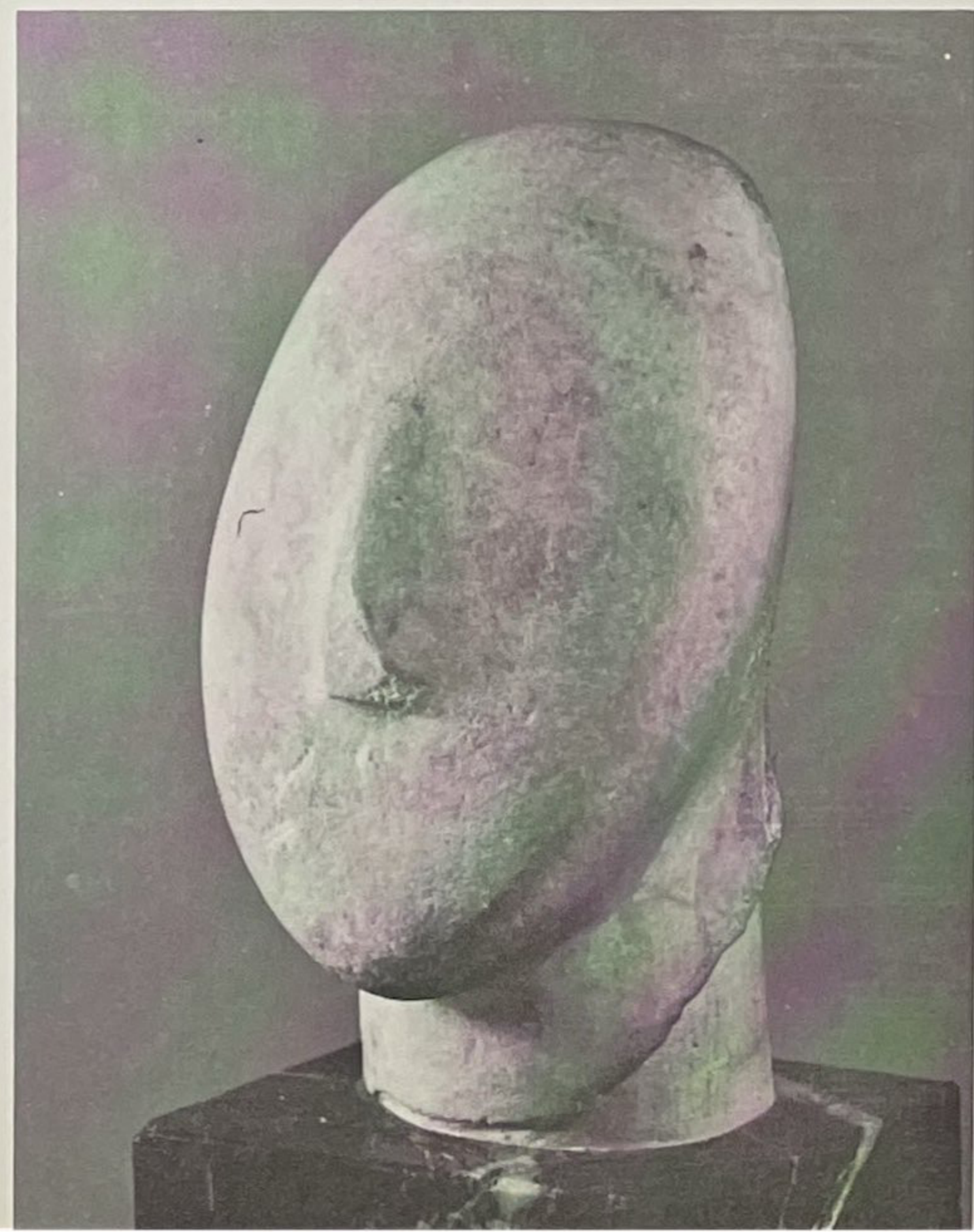


Detail: *Girl before a Mirror*, Pablo Picasso  
Museum of Modern Art, New York



Head of Bodhisattva, late Sung Dynasty  
Cleveland Museum

Cycladic head of an idol  
Louvre, Paris





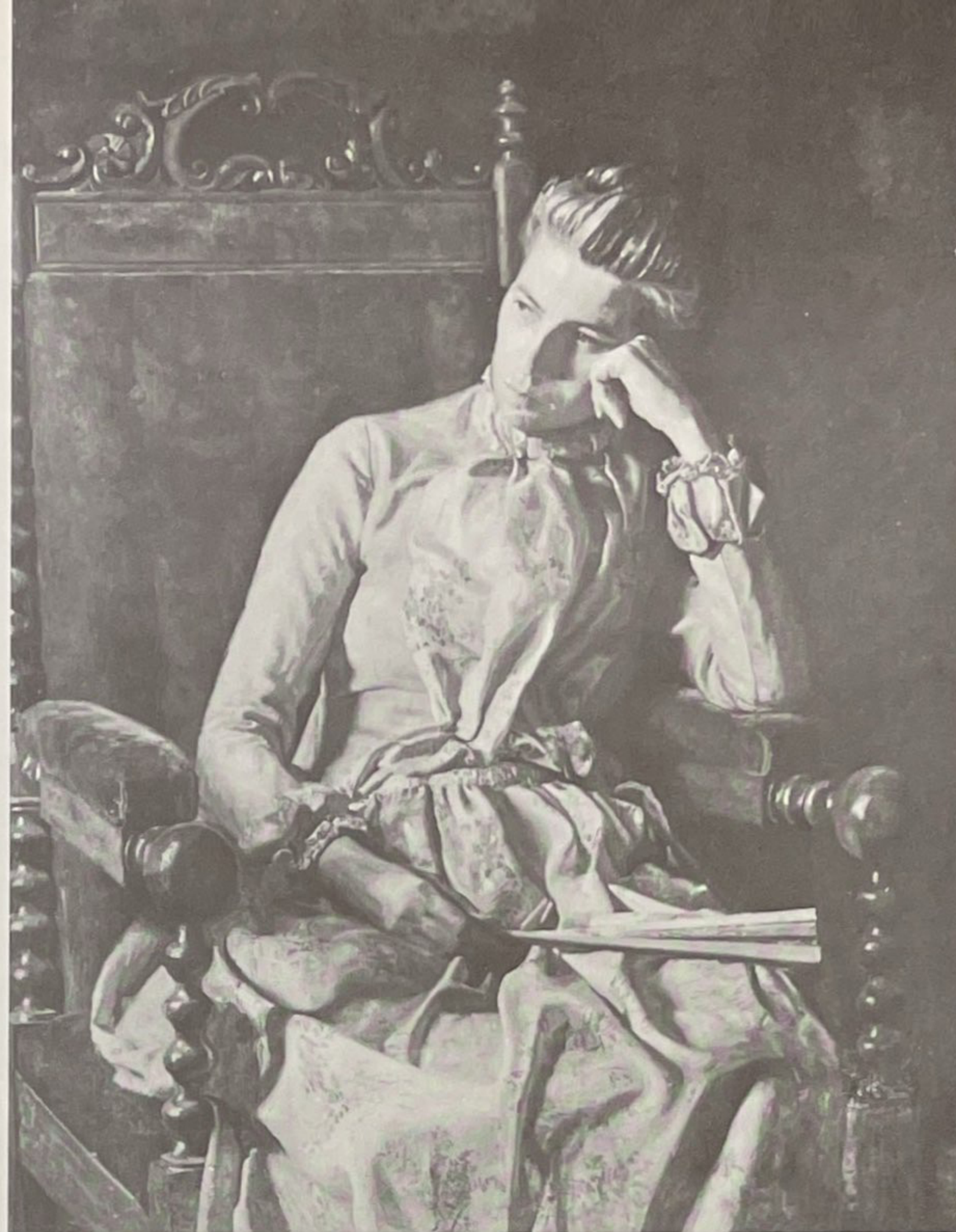
## The uses of heads and hands in art

Can you guess which piece of art on these pages is the oldest? It's the rather contemporary-looking one at the bottom right of the facing page. Speechless and sightless, this serene, elegantly stylized marble head is from an early Cycladic idol, carved over 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

Since that far-off time, and before, as long as man has been an artist, he has used heads and hands in many ways, for many reasons, in his works. They've been portrayed as belonging to men and to gods, sometimes realistically, sometimes symbolically. We find them painted in a lifelike way, as in the portrait at right, and abstractly, as in the Picasso painting at far left. They're used to stir the emotions, as Ben Shahn demonstrates with the boy's head and hand below; they're used stylistically in advertising and corporate design, as they are in the pointing hand and the CBS eye on the facing page. Heads and hands are man's most expressive possessions. No wonder they've served so well so often in helping him convey what he has to say in his art.



Roman votive hand dedicated to the Jupiter Heliopolitanus of Baalbek (bronze)  
Louvre, Paris



Miss Van Buren, Thomas Eakins  
The Phillips Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Poster for the CIO, Ben Shahn  
Museum of Modern Art, New York







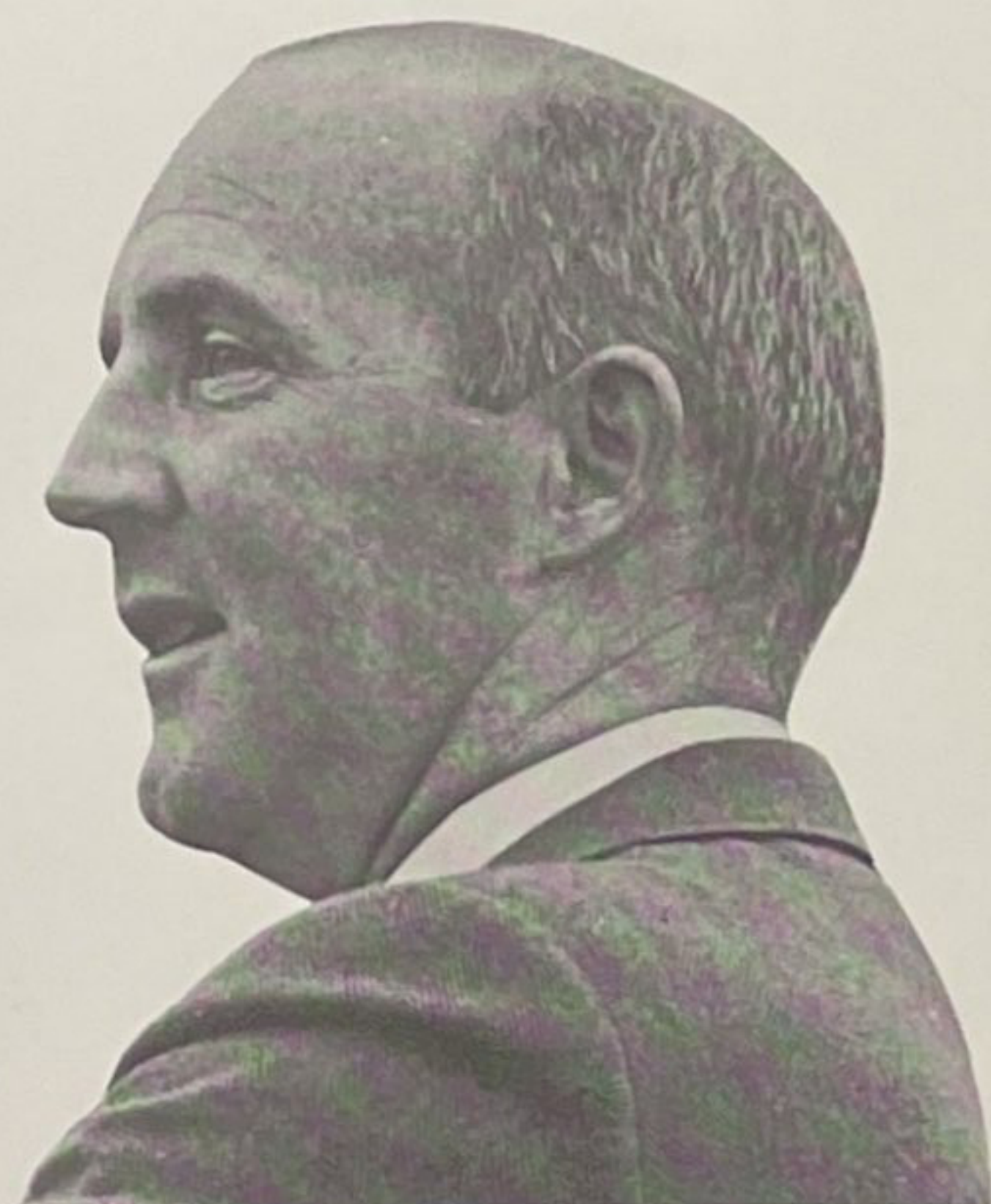
Head of a Young Harlequin, Pablo Picasso  
In The Brooklyn Museum Collection

## Drawing heads

You can't draw a head until you see it whole. That might sound obvious, but the truth is that many people *don't* draw heads that way. They draw a face first, then attach it to a head shape. That makes about as much sense as drawing doors and windows, and then putting a house around them. The whole head is a basic form from which all masses, the planes of the face and the features evolve. Every part of the head relates to the others and to that basic shape.

The best way to learn about the way heads are made is to study them in the flesh, and then draw what your eye tells you. Look closely at heads everywhere you go. Compare their shapes and the way their features are formed, and draw as many as often as you can. At home, you might draw your father's head as he reads the paper or your sister's while she's deep in homework. Don't ask them to pose for you, though. They might expect you to draw a likeness and we don't want you to think of doing that. If you do, you might concentrate on the wrong things, like the exact shape of the features or the precise distance between the eyes. Right now, we want you to see and feel and draw the solid form of the head.

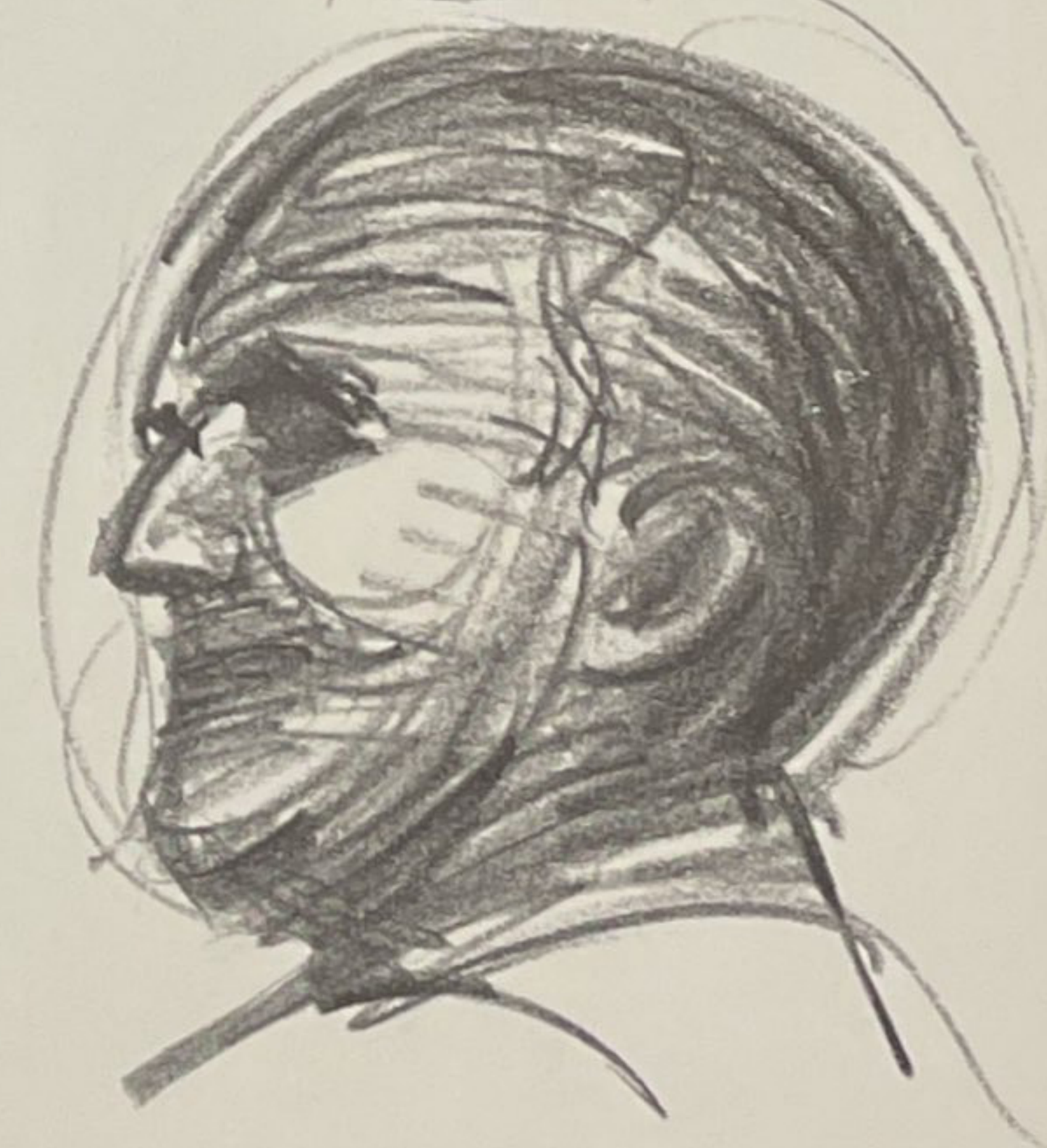
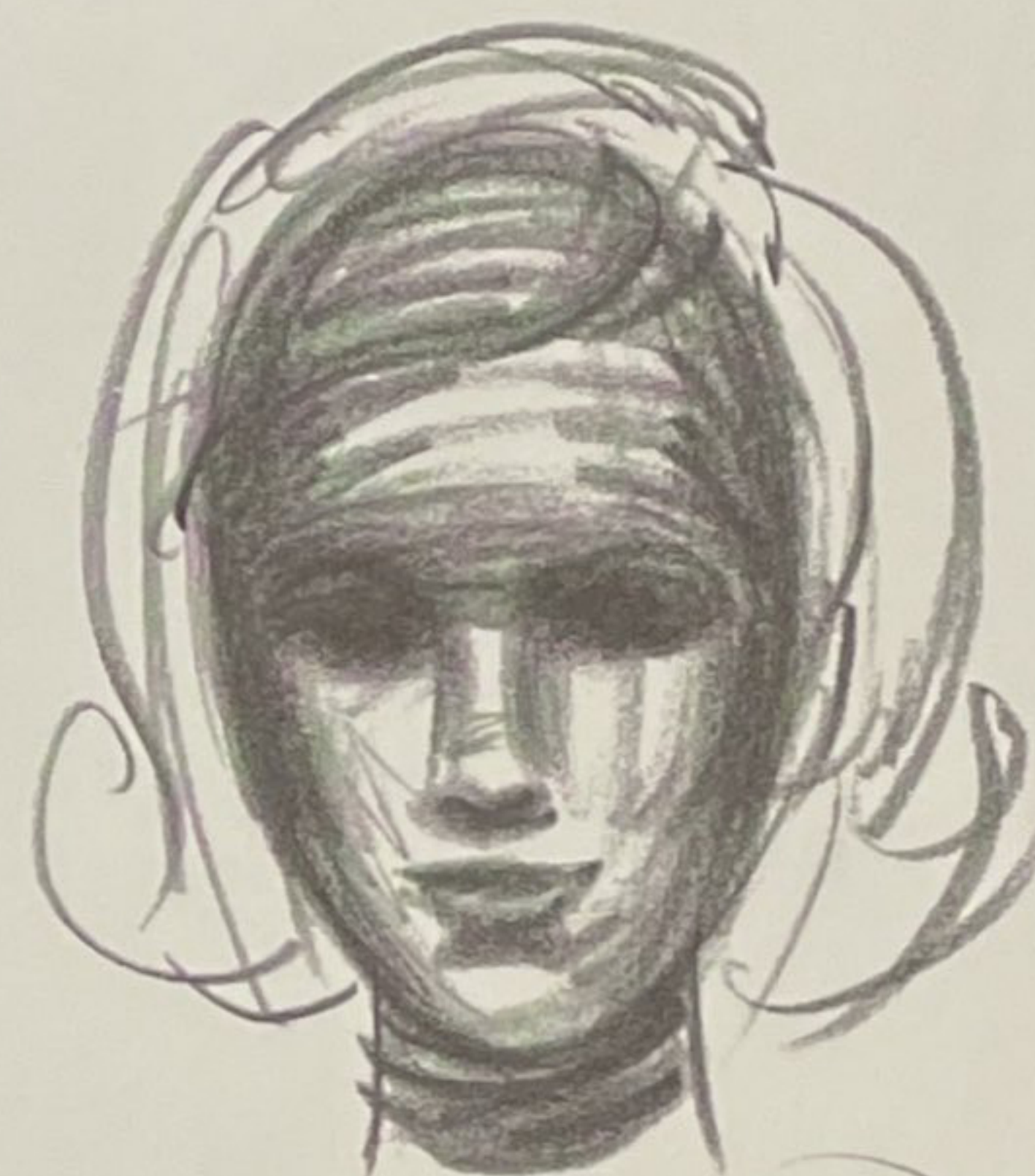
Sketch the head shape first, keeping in mind the relative height and width of the main areas. Indicate the front and side planes, then place the features. Don't try to finish any one part ahead of the others, but keep the whole drawing moving along at about the same rate. On these pages are some drawing suggestions that you should remember and use. They'll be helpful, whether you're drawing from life or from your imagination.



Here are two heads, one oval, the other more spherical. Shape is only the beginning of their differences, though. Look at the particular way each is put together, from the breadth of the forehead to the direction of the nose to the set of the jaw and the curve of the chin. Look for all the unique, identifying characteristics, from the most outstanding to the most elusive, when you draw a head.

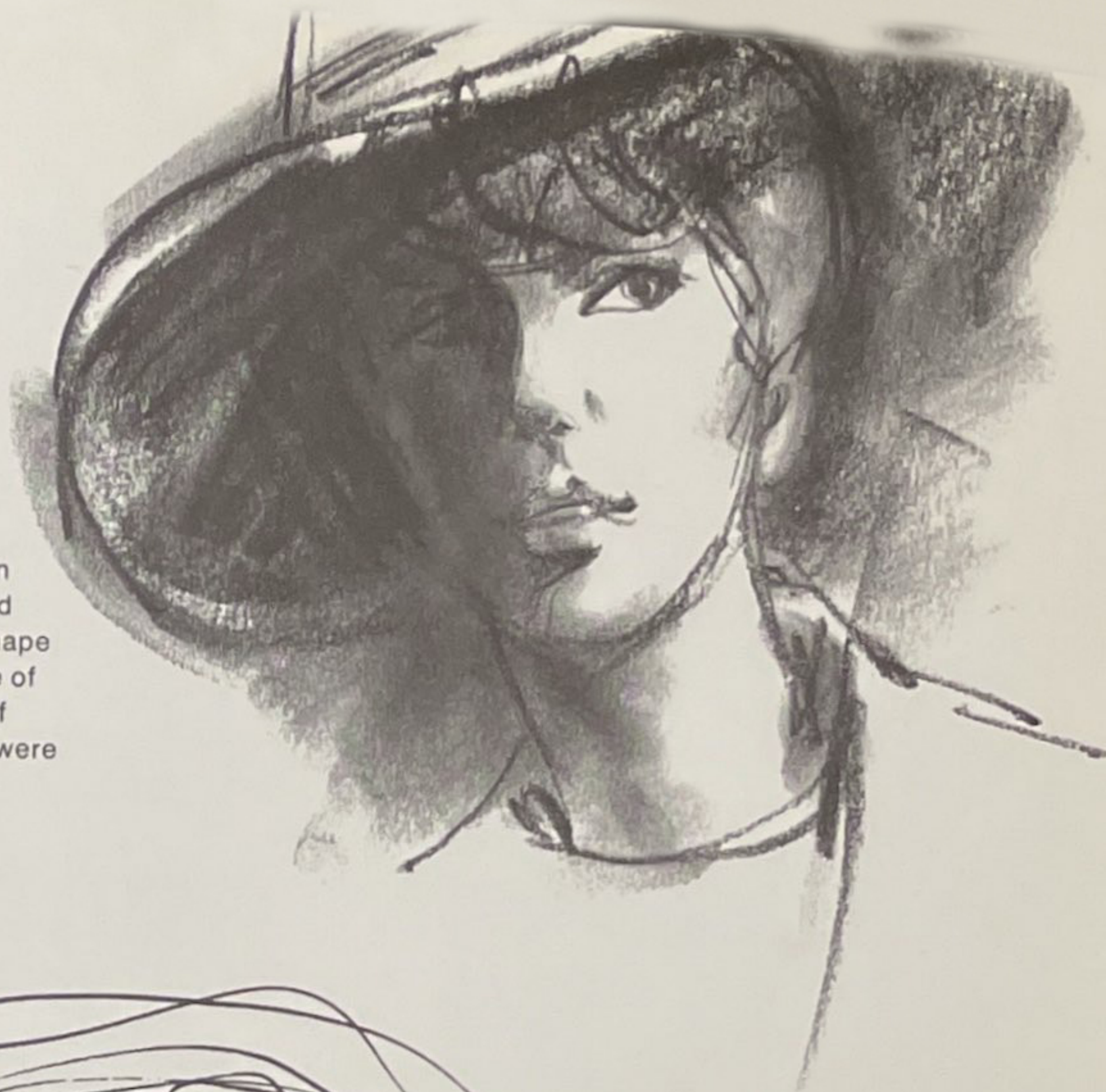


All heads have a certain characteristic flow of lines — a gesture. If you learn to see it and feel it out with your pencil, you can capture the essence of a head with a very few strokes. In these quick sketches we can see all we really need to, to know what these people look like.



You've had experience in giving a sense of solidity to your drawings through the use of lights and darks, and by feeling out the form of the object with your pencil or brush. You can use the same approach to drawing the head. Here, the pencil lines describe the visible parts so believably, we can easily feel the solidity of the entire form — even the parts we cannot see.

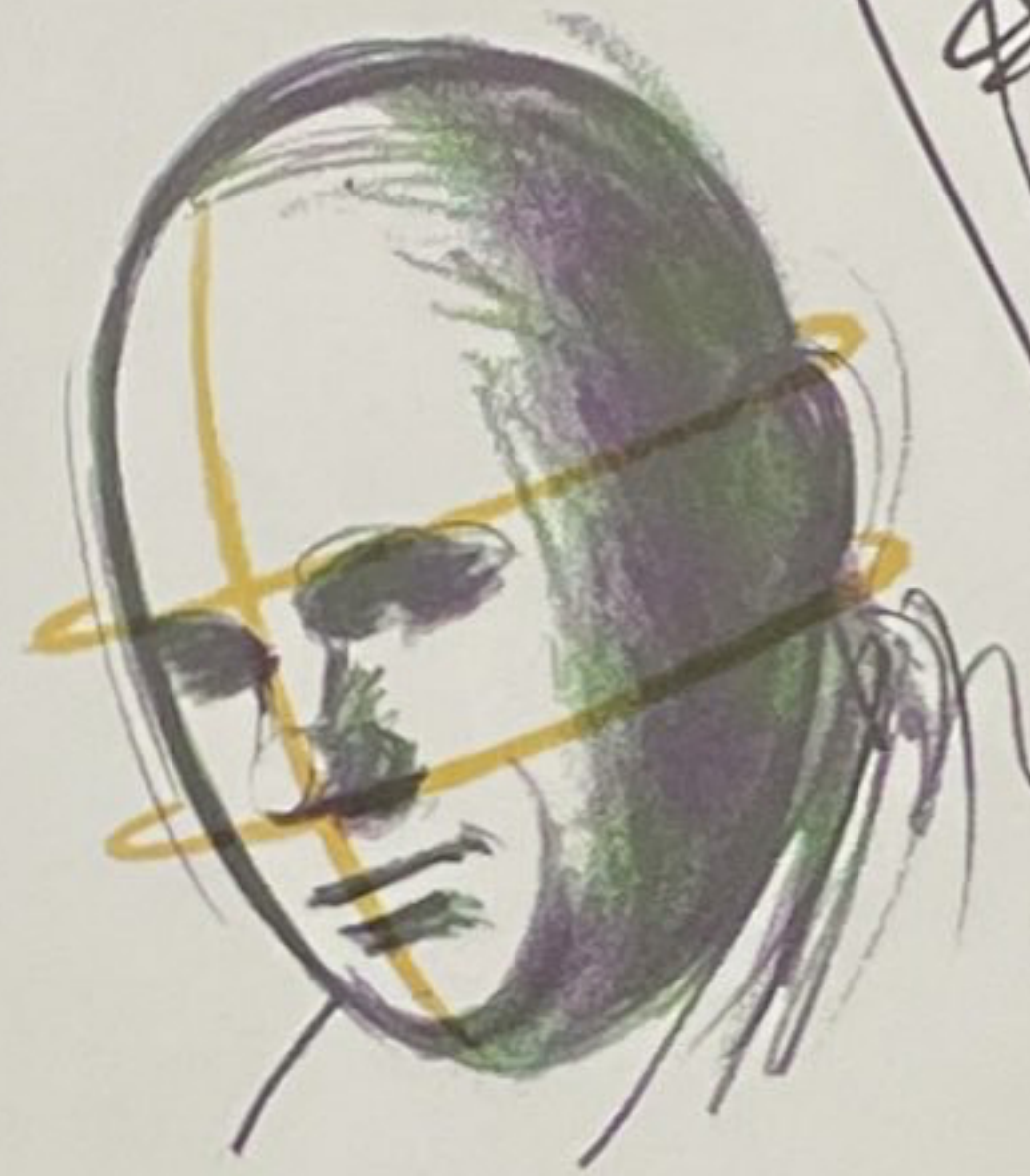




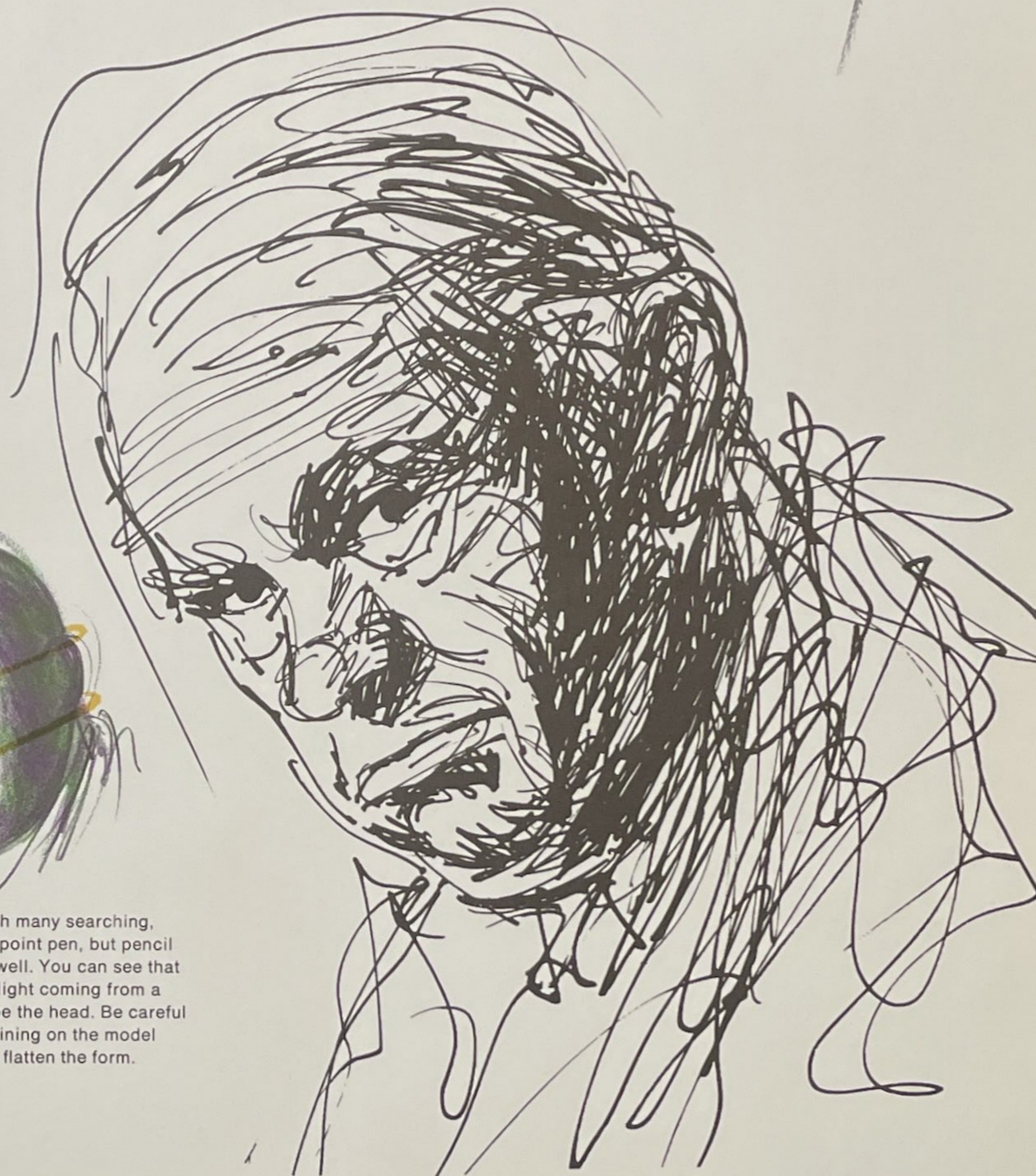
Even though some of the edges are in deep shadow, the artist never allowed this drawing to lose the basic oval shape of the head and the cylindrical shape of the neck. We are as strongly aware of these shapes as we would be if they were totally visible.



This sketch was drawn in ink, using very fine pen lines to build up tone. Note the strong pattern of light and shadow which gives form to the head. Note also the perspective here. We are looking up at the model and, from this angle, her eyes and mouth curve up just slightly to conform to the tilt of the head.



Here the form emerges through many searching, scribbly lines. We use a bowl-point pen, but pencil or crayon would work just as well. You can see that in all three of these drawings light coming from a single source helps to describe the head. Be careful about light. Too much of it, shining on the model from too many directions, can flatten the form.



### Try scribble drawings to feel the form and weight

The purpose of this exercise is to get you to feel, as you draw, the solid form of a head. With your pencil or crayon, try to sense the contours and surfaces of the head as truly as if you were actually feeling them with your fingers. Where the form curves back, or where there's a depression, press harder with your pencil. That will make those areas darker, giving the illusion of three-dimensional form. Keep studying the model, trying to observe every subtlety of the form. Keep your line swinging around and around, barely touching the paper to describe the forward part, bearing down to follow the sides as they retreat from sight. Your drawing may become very dark, but don't worry about that. Use cheap paper for these exercises.



Crayon



Pen and ink



## The features

On these two pages, we're going to study and observe in turn the eye, nose, mouth and ear. Even though the features are part of the whole, each has unique characteristics that you should understand if you're to draw them well. When you learn how the features are constructed and how they fit into their surroundings, you'll find it easier to relate them to each other and to the entire head.

There is much to remember when you draw the features — first that they aren't set on a flat surface, but fit the curve of the face. This subtle roundedness should be felt in every face and feature line you draw.

As the head shifts its position, the features appear to change. Watch someone's head move to see what happens to his features. The nose looks foreshortened when he tilts his head backward, longer when he looks down. The best way to learn to draw the features of a face in different positions is to observe them carefully and draw them over and over.

Devote many separate studies to each feature, drawing it from different angles, and including a little of its surroundings in each sketch. Draw from life and from memory. Memory drawing is good discipline; it will make you see more sharply when you work from life.

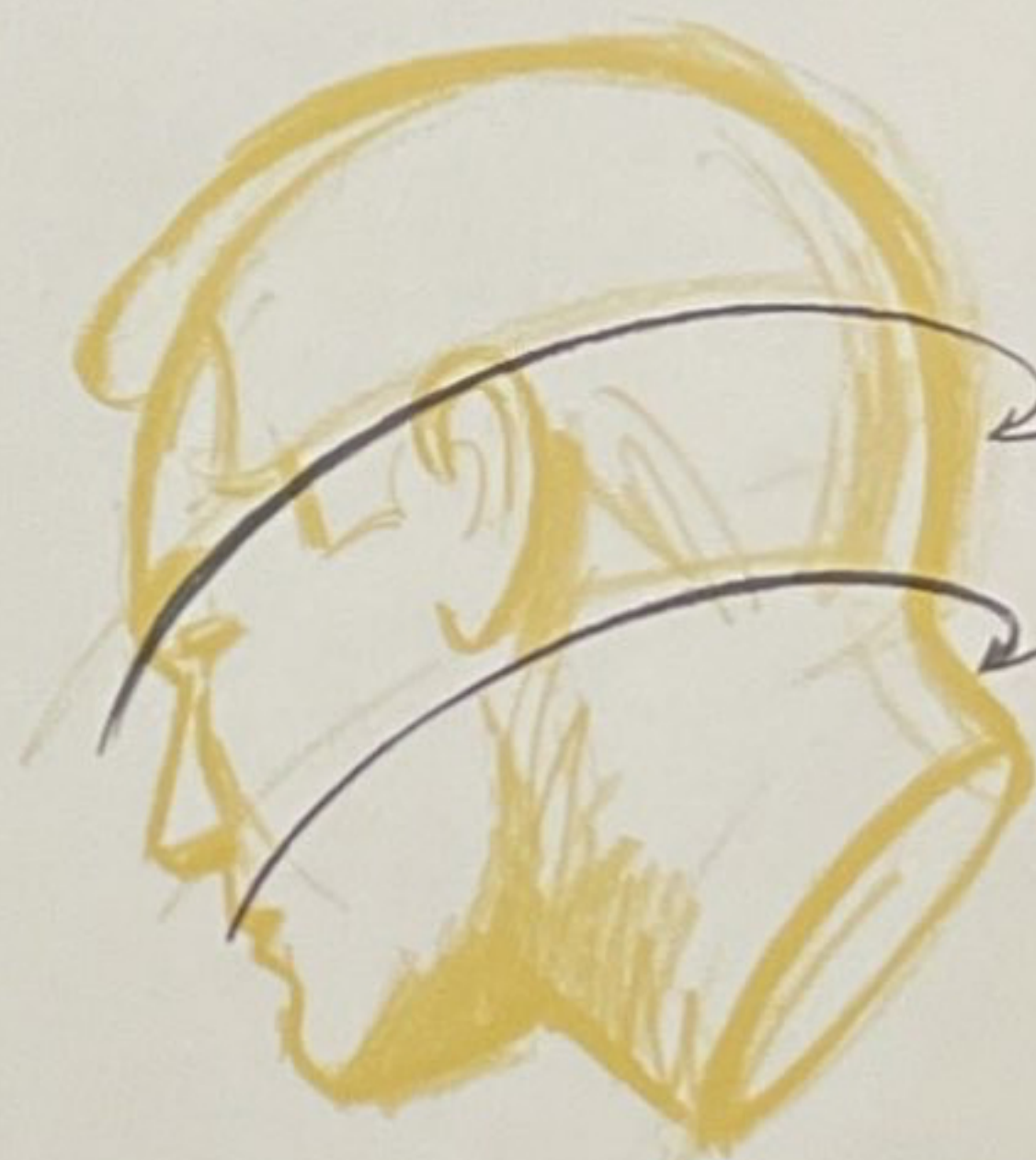
The diagrams on these pages are here to show you what to look for in drawing features; they aren't drawing methods for you to copy. In the end, you'll just have to trust your eyes to tell you how the features look each time, and how they fit into the particular head you're drawing.



Study of the Head of an Angel, Detail, Leonardo da Vinci  
Biblioteca Reale, Turin

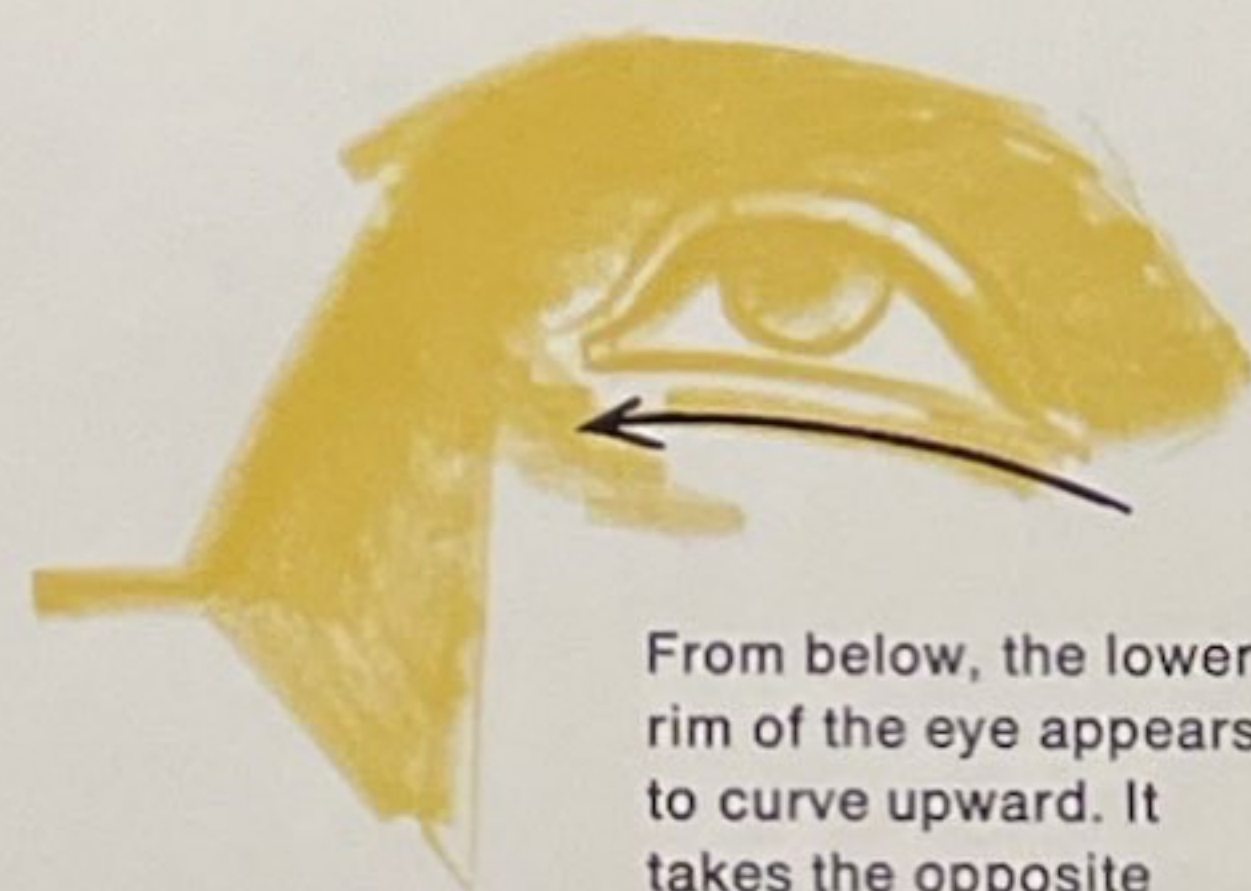


The features appear to change as the head turns and tilts. Observe the features in many different positions and draw them over and over. Even the slightest change in perspective will alter the way you'll draw the whole head.

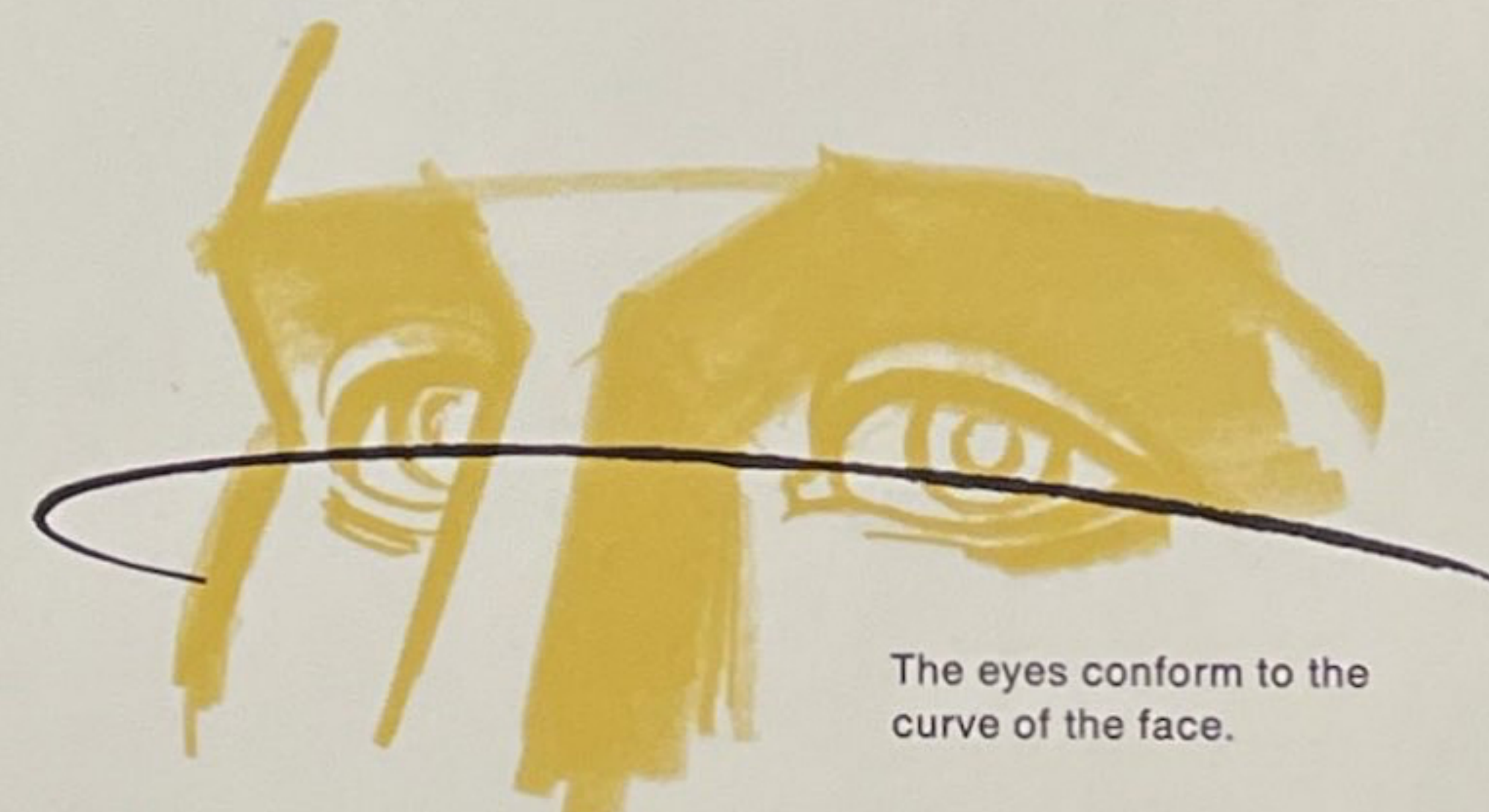
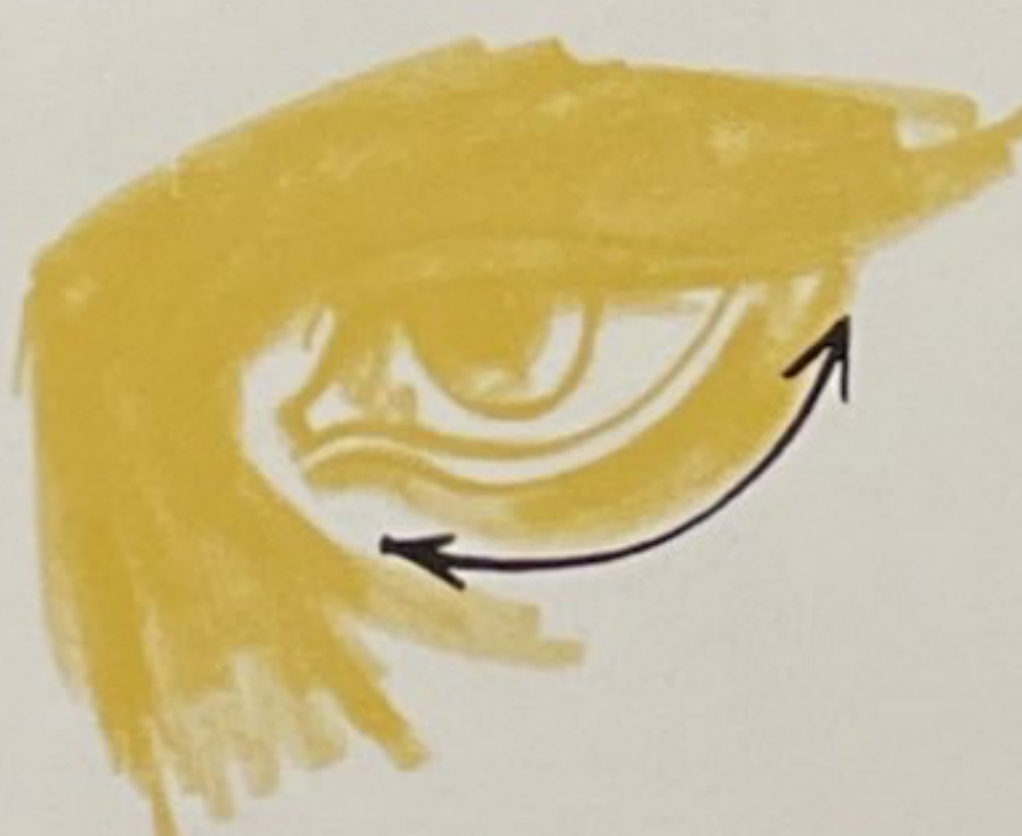


### The eye

The eye is a ball, set into a protective socket and partly covered by the upper and lower lids. The lids come together at the outside corner of the eye but they don't touch at the inside corner because the little tear duct separates them. Look into a mirror and you'll see that your eyes aren't identical — no one's are. When you observe people's eyes, try to see the slight differences in their shapes and sizes. See what happens to the eyes when the facial expression changes. Laughing eyes tend to slant upward; sad eyes downward. There is no formula, though, that covers all the variations. The slightest change in expression or in the position of the head alters the look of the eye. You have to study your model and draw what you see.



From below, the lower rim of the eye appears to curve upward. It takes the opposite direction when you look at it from above.



The eyes conform to the curve of the face.

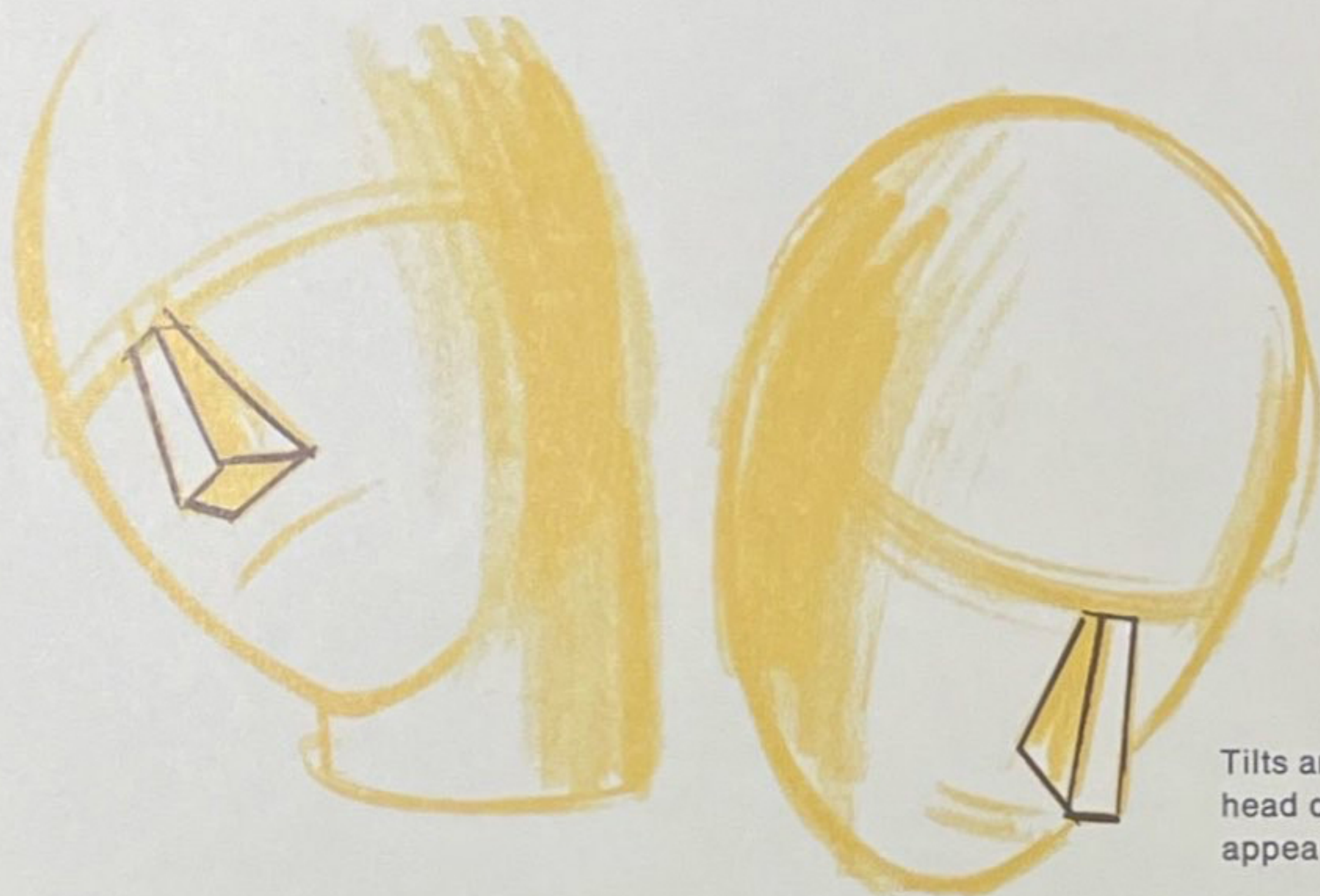


The iris, which is round, looks elliptical as the head turns to the side.



## The nose

The nose is wedge-shaped, narrow at the top, wider at the bottom. Feel your own nose and you'll see that the upper part has a hard, bony structure, that the lower part is softer. The shape of the nose bone directs the general shape of the nose. If it projects prominently, the nose takes the shape we call aquiline. If it is short, the nose is short, too, and is apt to tilt slightly upward. The nose affects the appearance of the face more than any other feature.



Tilts and turns of the head change the appearance of the nose.



Think of the nose as a three-sided wedge.



The nose is the most distinguishing feature. Note the differences in the shape and direction of noses.

## The mouth

The mouth follows the underlying curve of the teeth. It's the most flexible of all the features, changing almost as often as we breathe. In drawing the mouth, the most important, telling line is the one that describes the opening between the lips. This line is never straight, as you'll find if you follow it closely. Look at some drawings of such masters as Holbein, Ingres and Dürer and you'll see how carefully they handle this single expressive line.



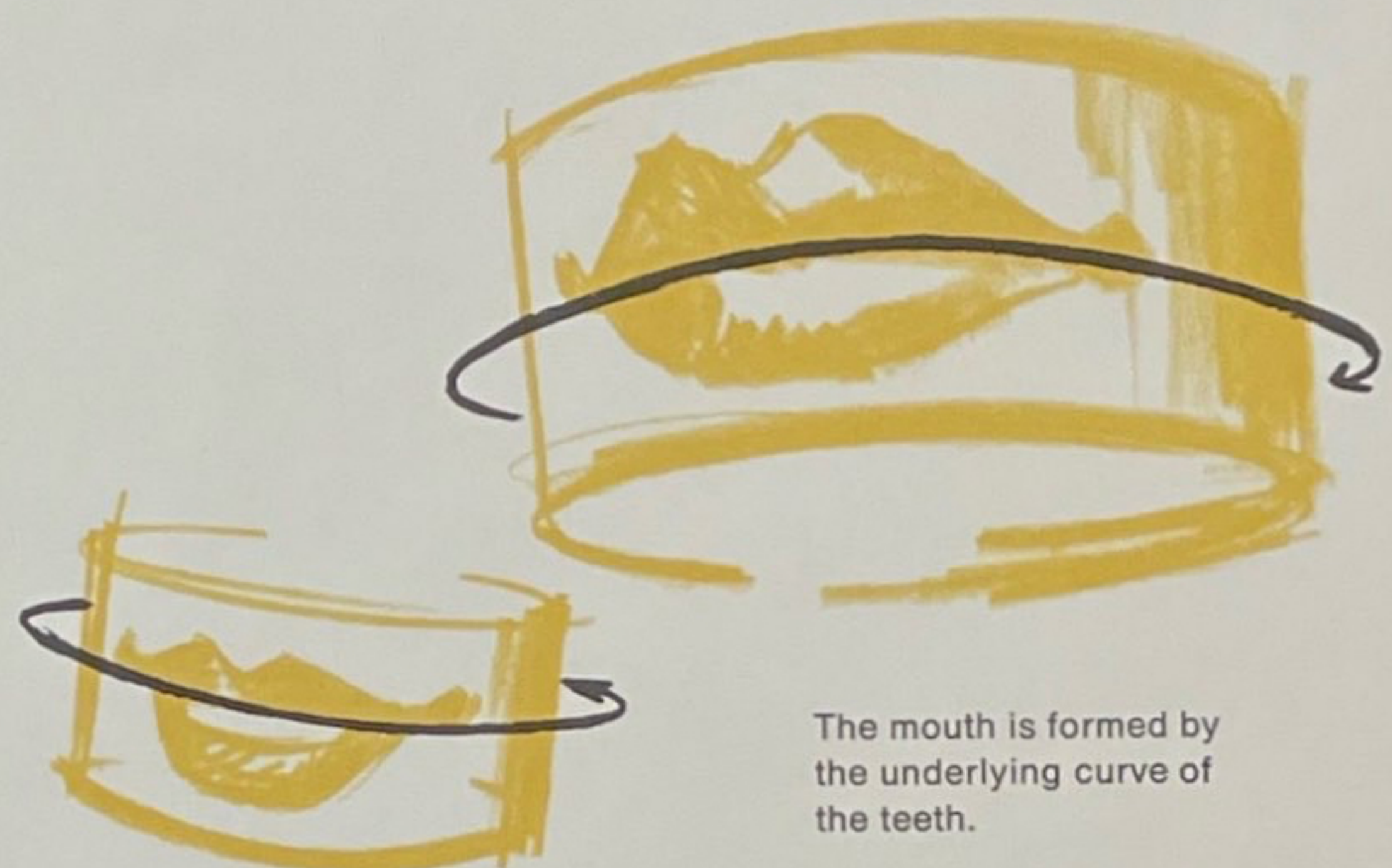
Think of the upper lip as having three sections, the lower lip as having two.



Remember that middle line of the mouth. It is important for likeness and expression.



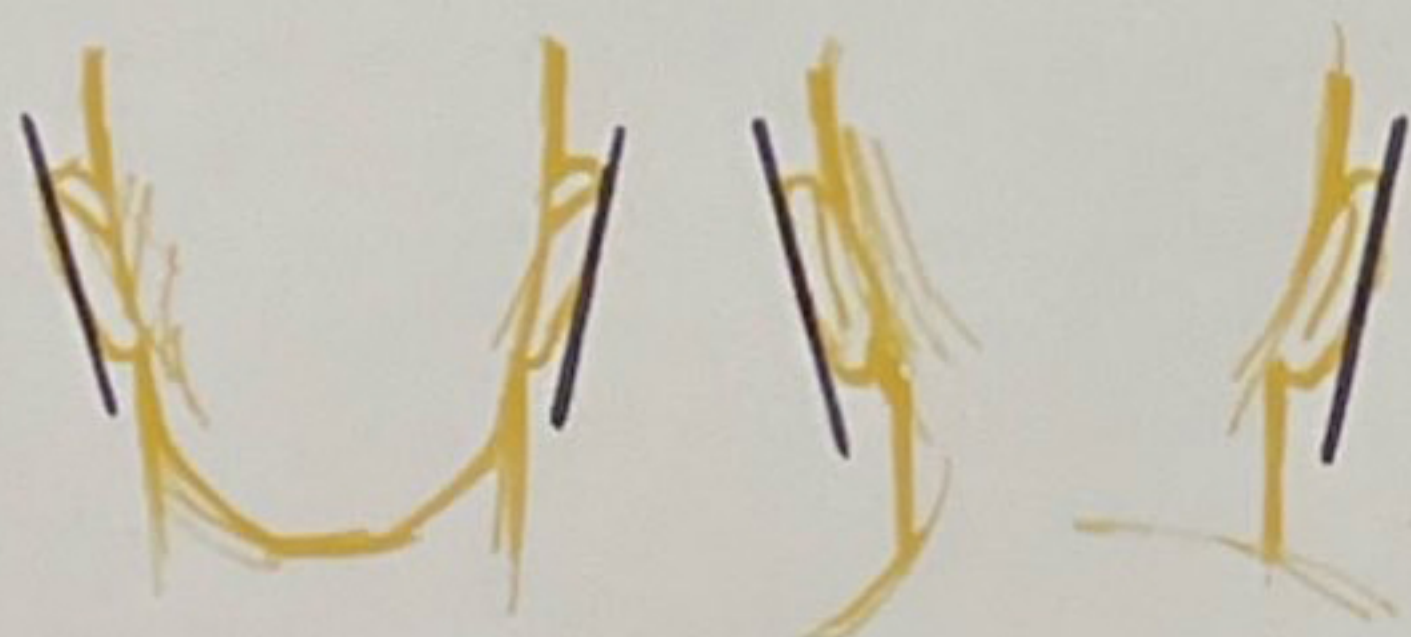
The upper lip usually projects slightly over the lower one, but not in every case. Look for variations in the shapes of mouths.



The mouth is formed by the underlying curve of the teeth.

## The ear

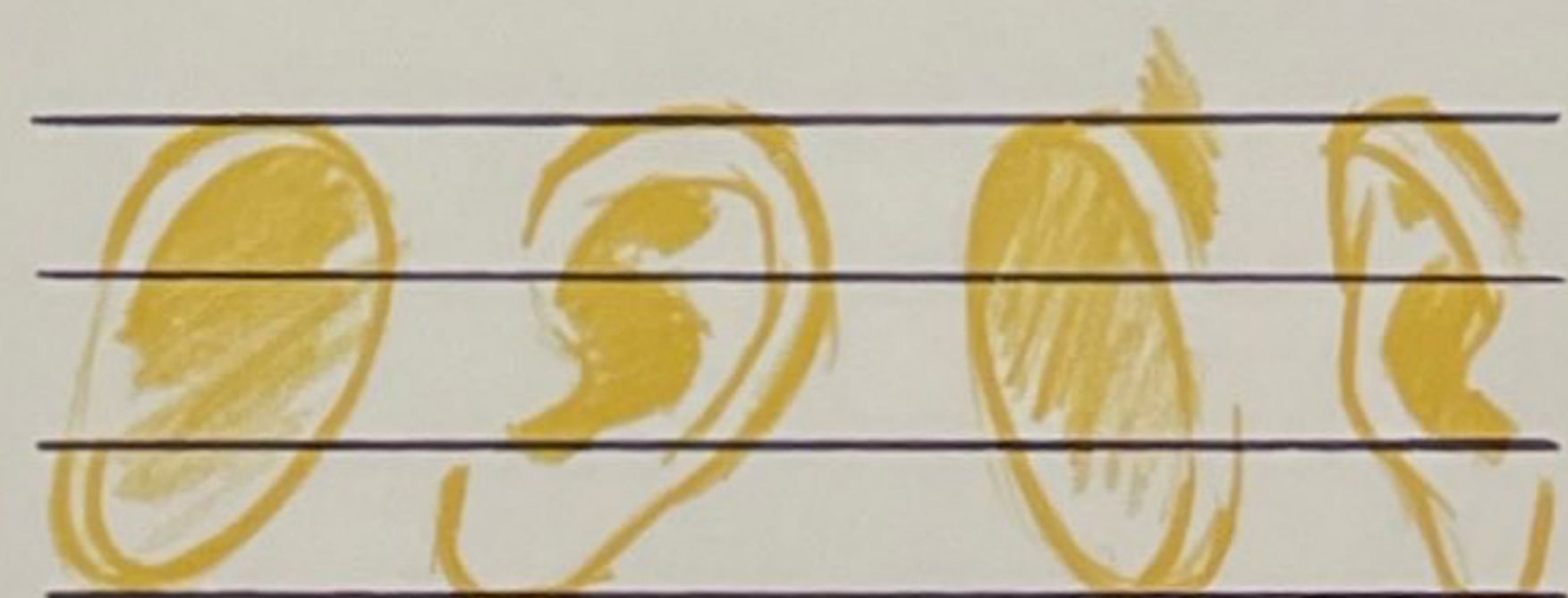
The ear is mostly cartilage. In the middle there is a bowl shape which is surrounded by whorls and curves. Ears are as varied as the other features of the face, but their basic design is always something like the one shown at right. In drawing a person's ear, observe not only its size and shape, but how it attaches to the head. Does it stick out, or is it tucked back snugly? How does it line up with the nose?



Ears normally line up with the head at this angle. Some ears fit up close to the head, some stand out a little.

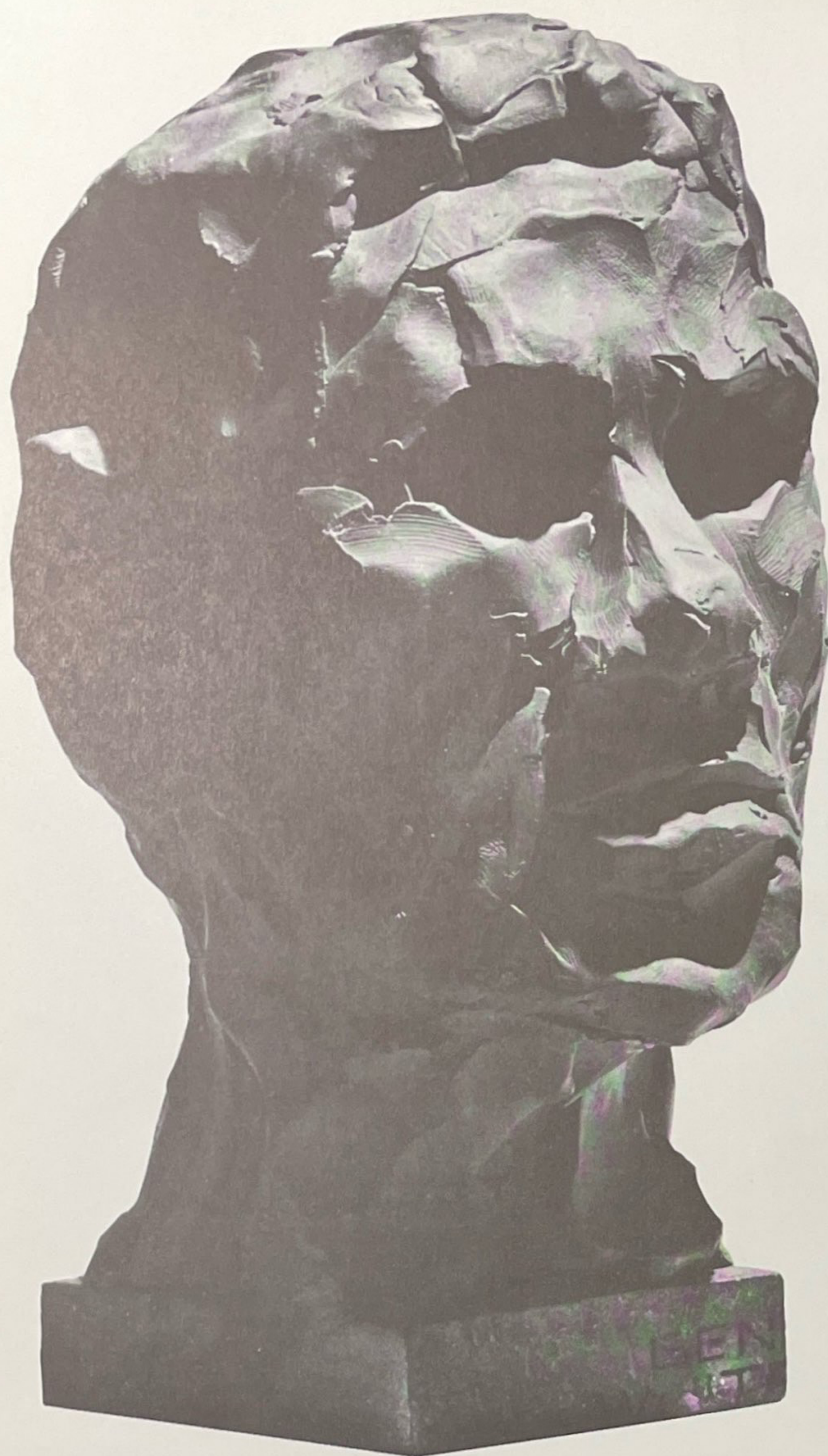


Generally, the top of the ear is in line with the eyebrow, the bottom of the lobe with the tip of the nose.



Think of the ear as a simple disk divided into three parts, with the bowl in the center.





## Model a head

Now we want you to make a clay head — not to learn to be a sculptor, but to learn more about drawing. When you finish this project, you should know much more than you do now about the proportions and placement of the main masses of the head, and be better able to relate the features to those masses and to each other. There's no better way to learn the geography of heads than by shaping one with your own hands.

You'll need only the simplest materials: two blocks of plasteline modeling clay (available at art stores) and a stand like the one below at left, which you can make by driving two large nails into a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch board about four inches square. Use your fingertips for sculpting tools.

Begin by molding the clay into two large shapes — a cylinder for the neck and a sphere for the head. First, the neck. Cut a block of clay in half and roll one of the halves into a solid cylinder about the size of a can of soup. Push it firmly down over the nails. Put the other half block aside — you'll use it as you go along.

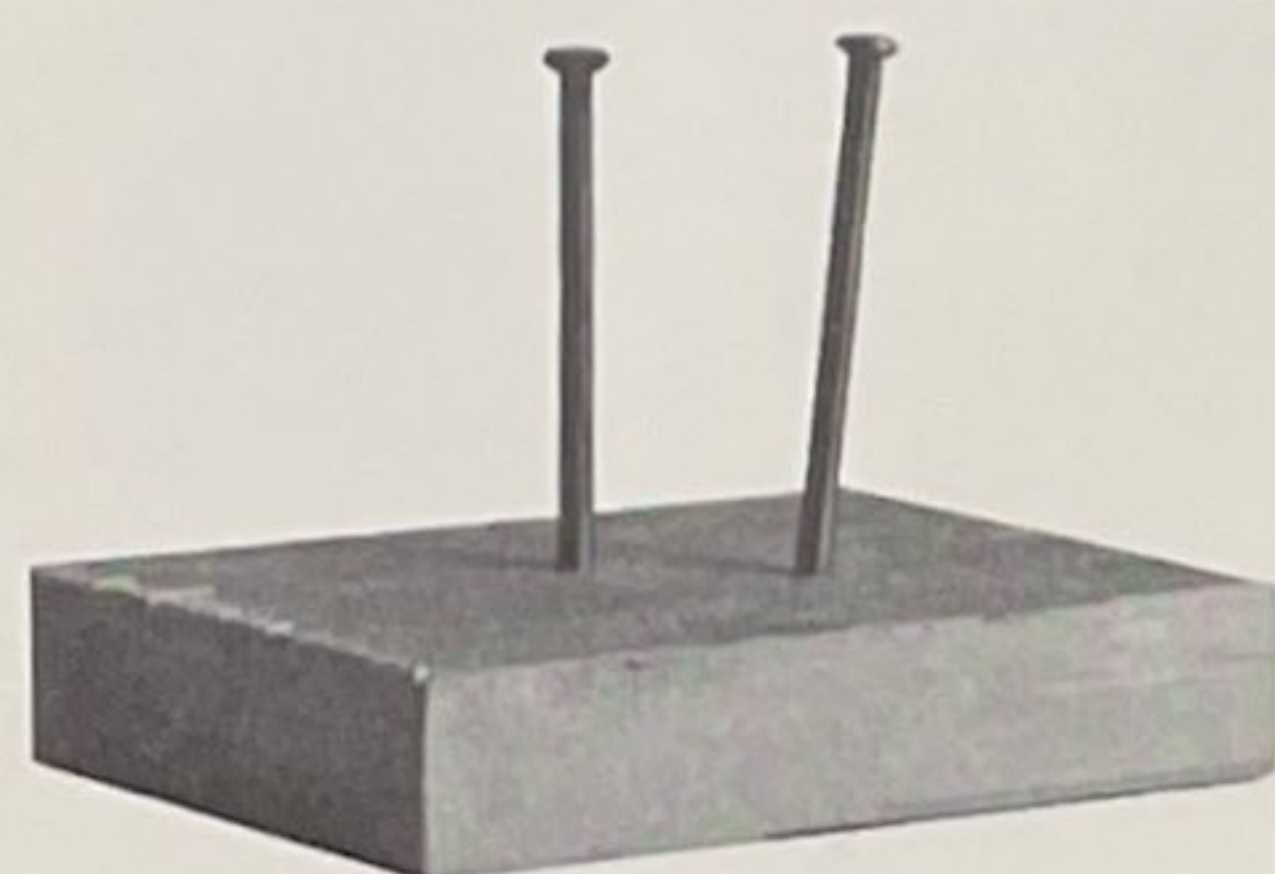
The remaining whole block of clay is for the head. Roll it into the shape of an egg. Then jam it squarely on top of the neck column and join the two by pushing the clay together with your fingers.

The egg is only the basic form for your head. Flatten it, make it fatter or shorter or longer — work it into whatever shape you want. When you've established the main masses, begin forming the eyes, nose and mouth. Remember, the features aren't separate articles stuck onto the face — they grow from the large masses of the head. All parts of the head are related to each other. Whatever you take away or add should be done to give that part a better relationship to all the others.

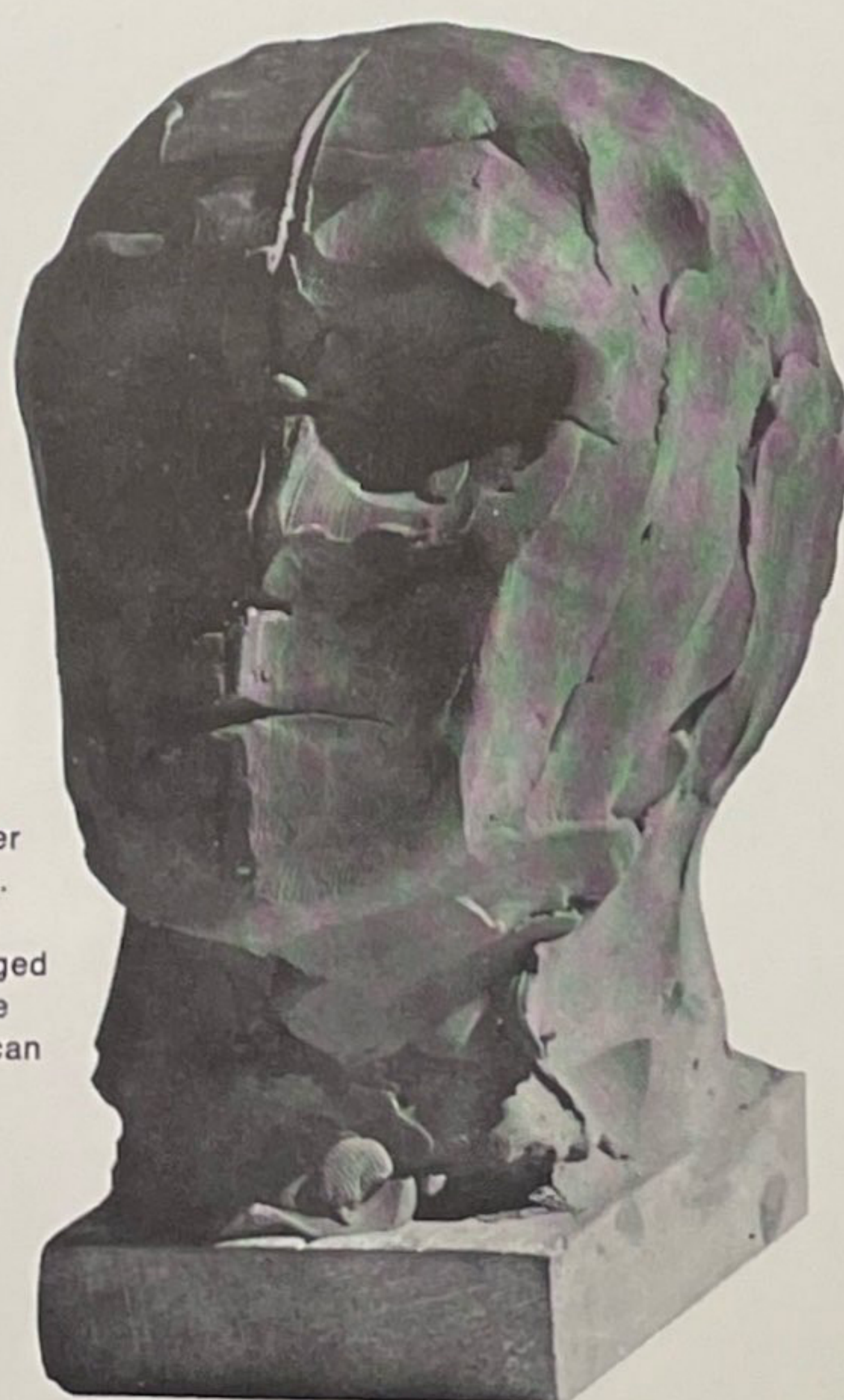
If you think of your sculpture as a human head and not just as a form in clay, you'll work with more conviction — and you'll learn more, too. Feel your own face and note where the bones come close to the surface of the skin, which parts are soft and fleshy.

As you shape each part, feel its function and try to transmit that feeling to your fingertips. The forehead, for example, forms a ledge over the eye to protect it. Remember this *function* of the frontal part of the skull when you model it. Make it hard and firm, as though it really is protecting the eyes. Remember that the jaw and teeth are hard, but the mouth is soft. When you mold the mouth, press your fingers lightly over the lips. If you keep in your fingertips the feeling of what you're modeling, the chances are that you'll remember it later on, when you draw a head.

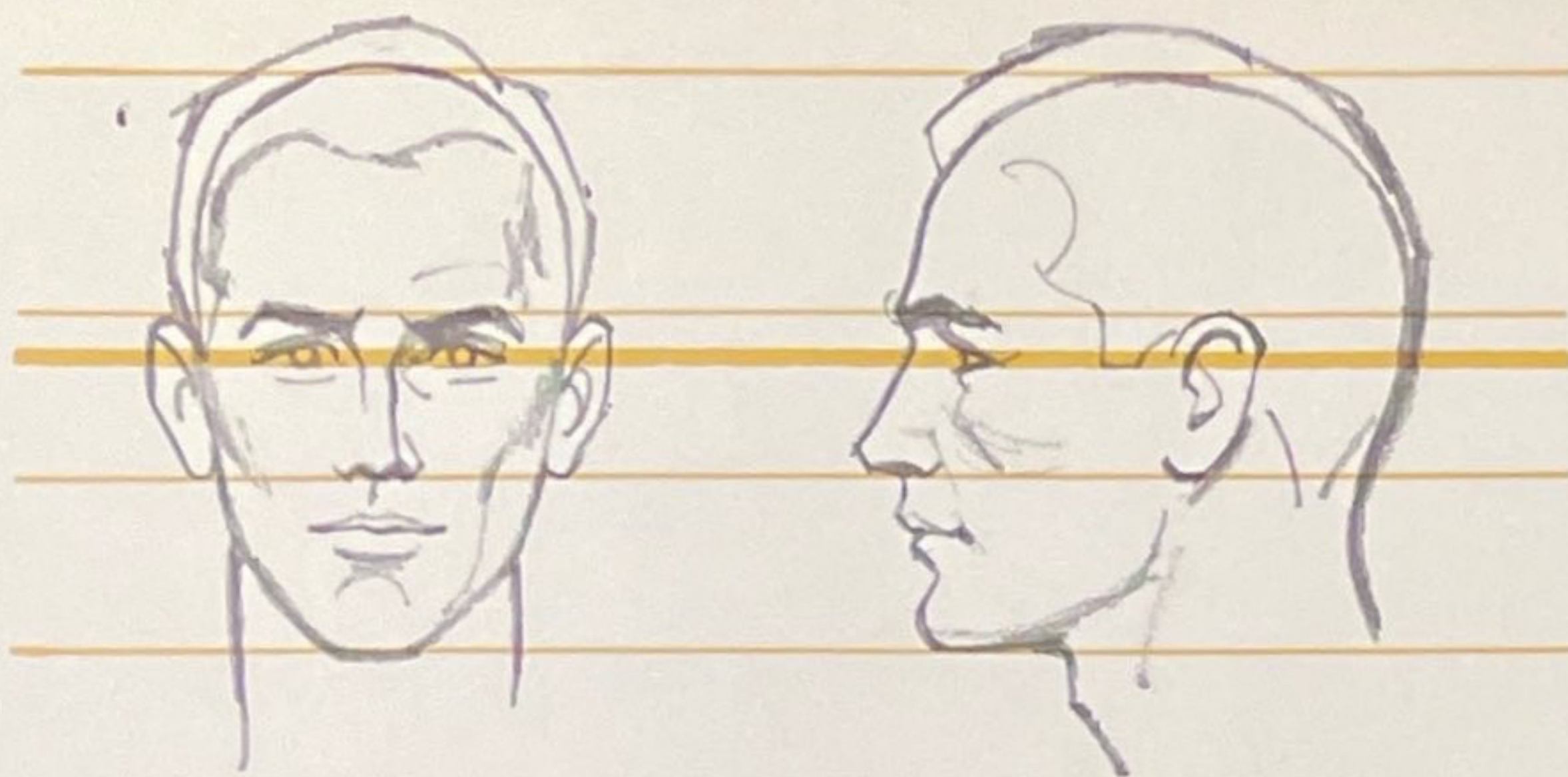
Keep in mind that the purpose of this project is to help you learn more about the nature of the head, about its construction and design. Don't be finicky with details — you might work your sculpture over so much that you take its life away. Try to preserve the immediacy of your first impression, even if the work looks rough. No one can tell you when your head is finished, but when you feel that your mind and eye and fingertips have learned all they can about the head from modeling this one, that's the time to stop.



Here is how the head should look after you've worked on it for a few minutes. Note that the main masses have been established, and the eye sockets gouged out of the clay. By scoring the surface of the head with your fingernail, you can indicate roughly the position of the features.







You remember, from Section 7, that artists have devised a set of ideal proportions to help them in drawing the human figure. Here are the same kind of divisions for the head — "perfect" proportions that aren't really true to life but are near enough to provide a handy yardstick when you want to position the features. In an ideally proportioned head, the eye line is in the exact center, dividing the head into two equal parts. The distance between the eyebrow and the bottom of the nose is equal to that between the bottom of the nose and the chin.

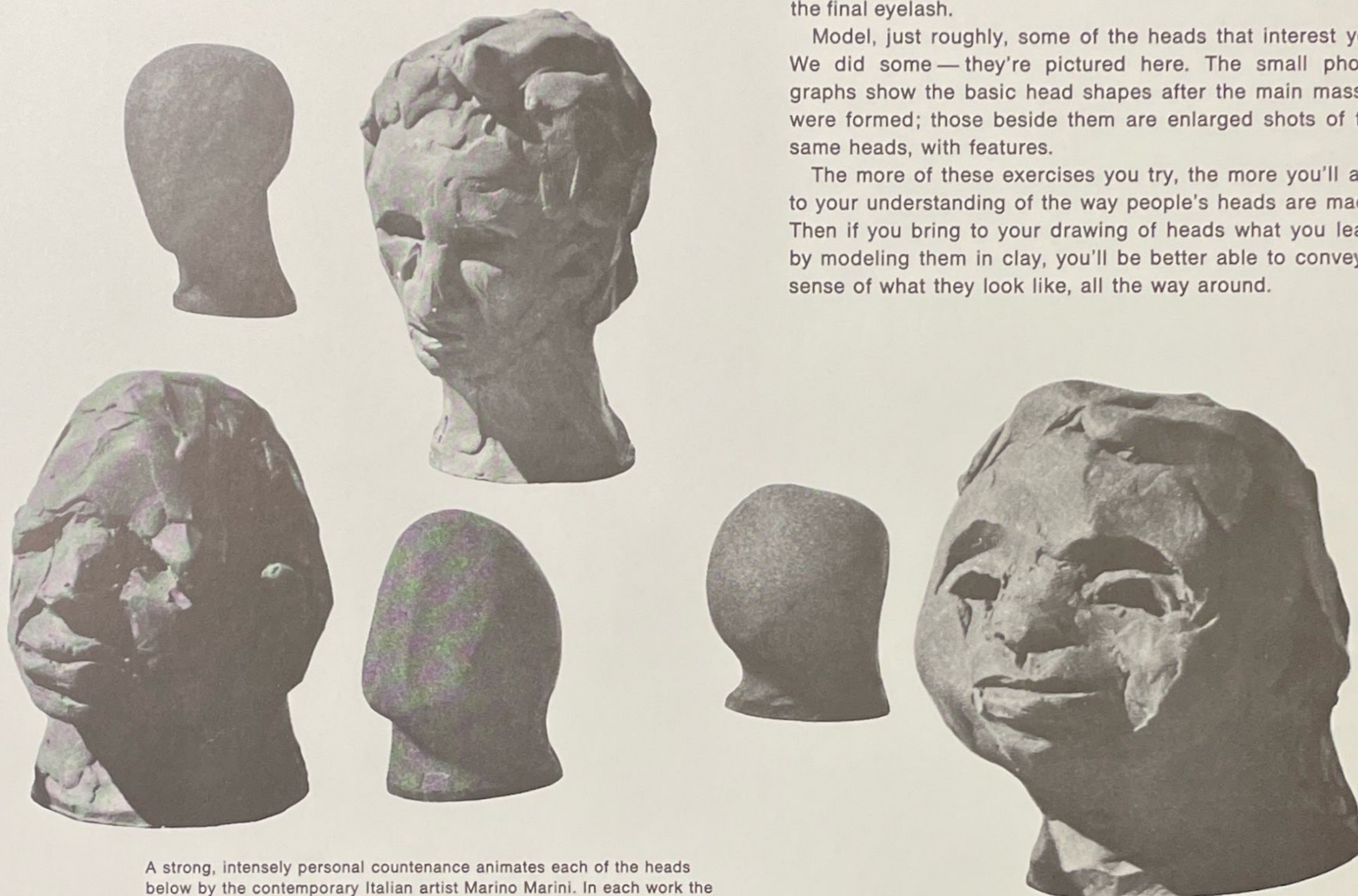
## Heads come in all shapes and sizes

Nature rarely, indeed probably never, comes up with an ideally proportioned head like the one diagrammed at left. What gives heads their individual character, what makes them interesting, is their slight departures from the ideal — a small nose tilting upward, a long chin, a high forehead, ears that are slightly large for the size of the skull.

Study people's heads. Round, square, long, flat, oval, bumpy, they're a boundless assortment of shapes and sizes. Notice the differences in the ways the main masses are made and put together — you'll see looming foreheads, receding jaws; you'll find sunken cheeks in old, toothless heads, hard, apple cheeks in young ones. The features are just as varied. Even identical twins' features aren't really identical, down to the final eyelash.

Model, just roughly, some of the heads that interest you. We did some — they're pictured here. The small photographs show the basic head shapes after the main masses were formed; those beside them are enlarged shots of the same heads, with features.

The more of these exercises you try, the more you'll add to your understanding of the way people's heads are made. Then if you bring to your drawing of heads what you learn by modeling them in clay, you'll be better able to convey a sense of what they look like, all the way around.

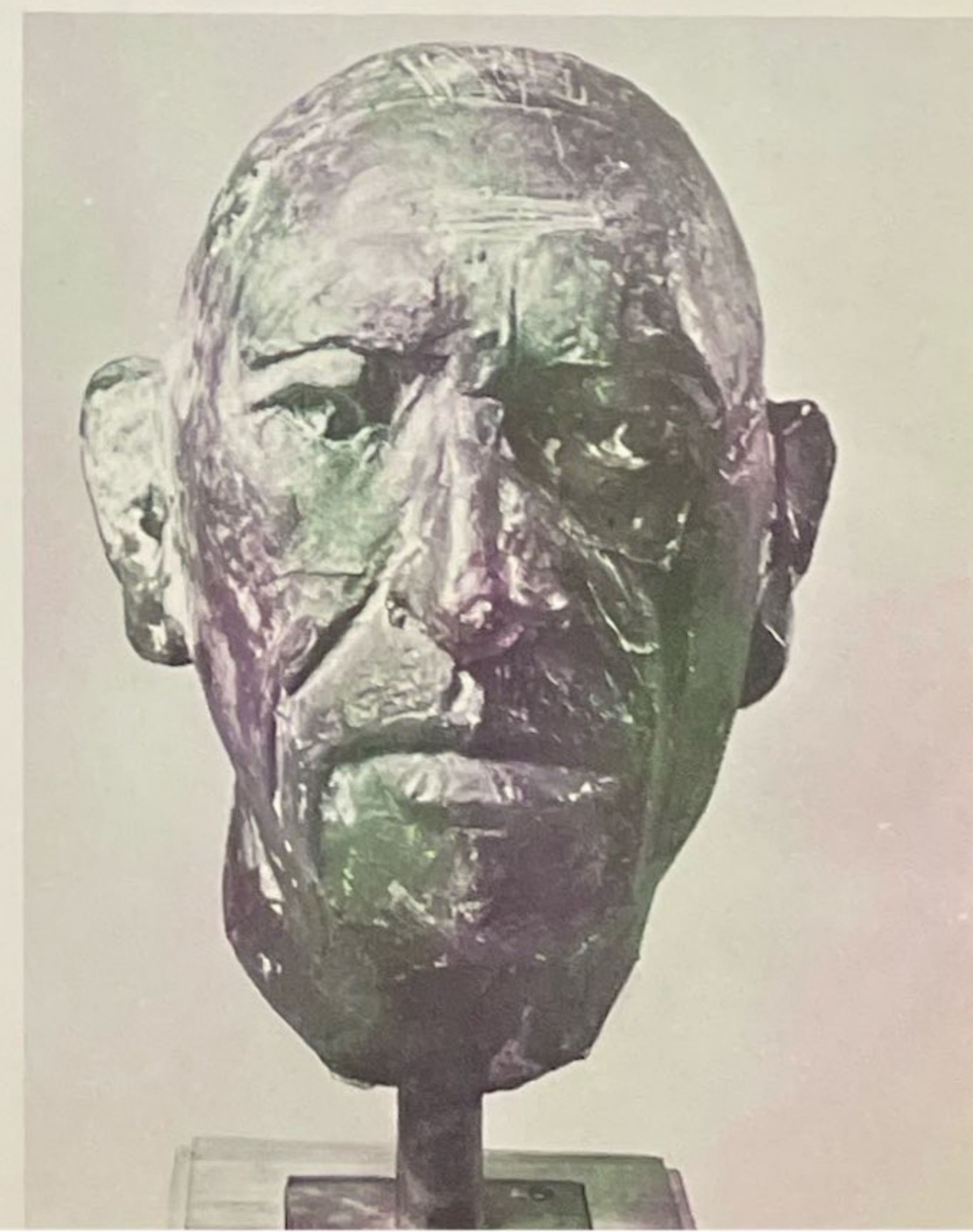
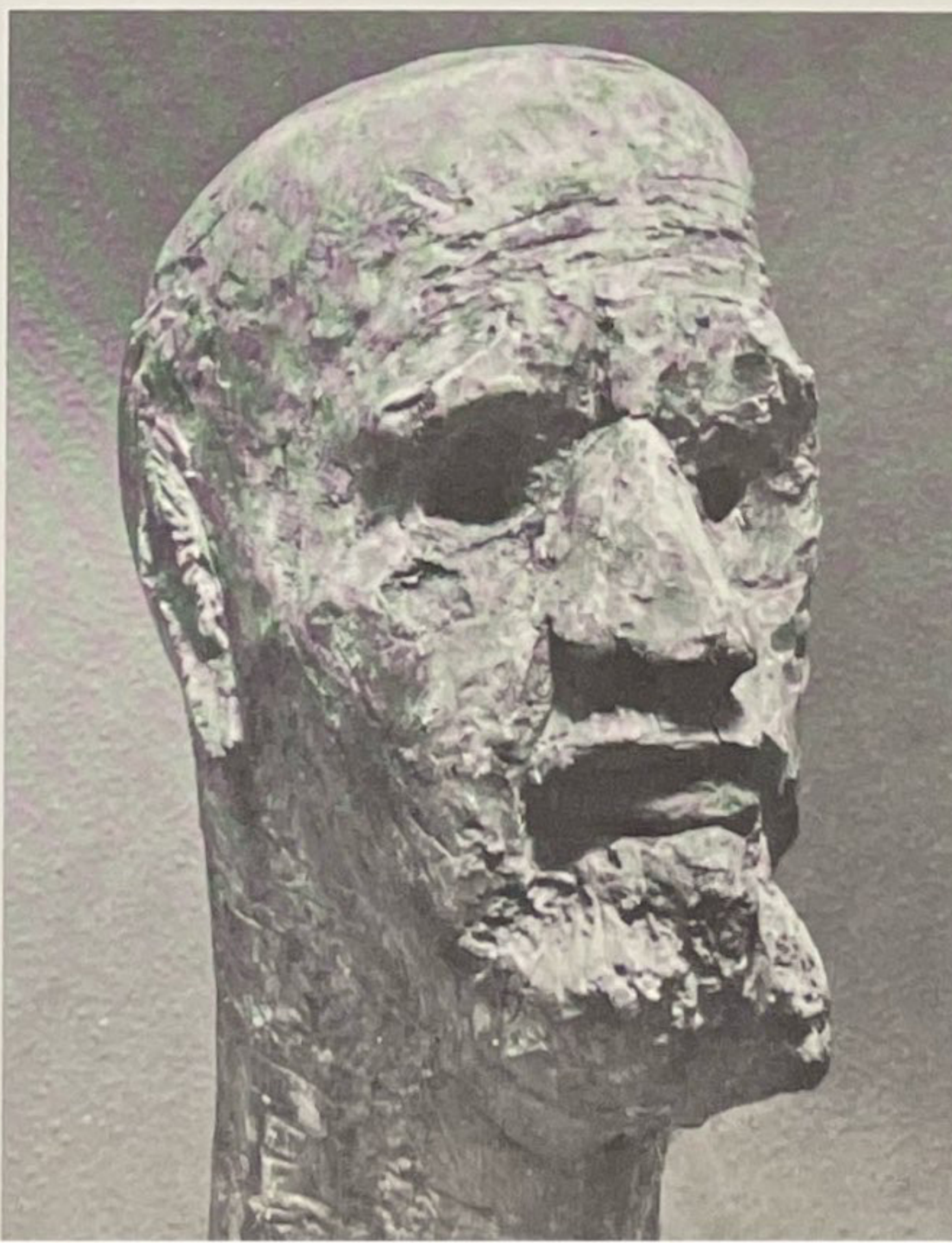


A strong, intensely personal countenance animates each of the heads below by the contemporary Italian artist Marino Marini. In each work the artist has shaped the large masses of the head, the facial planes and features not as separate components stuck together, but as integrated parts of one beautifully modeled sculptural form.

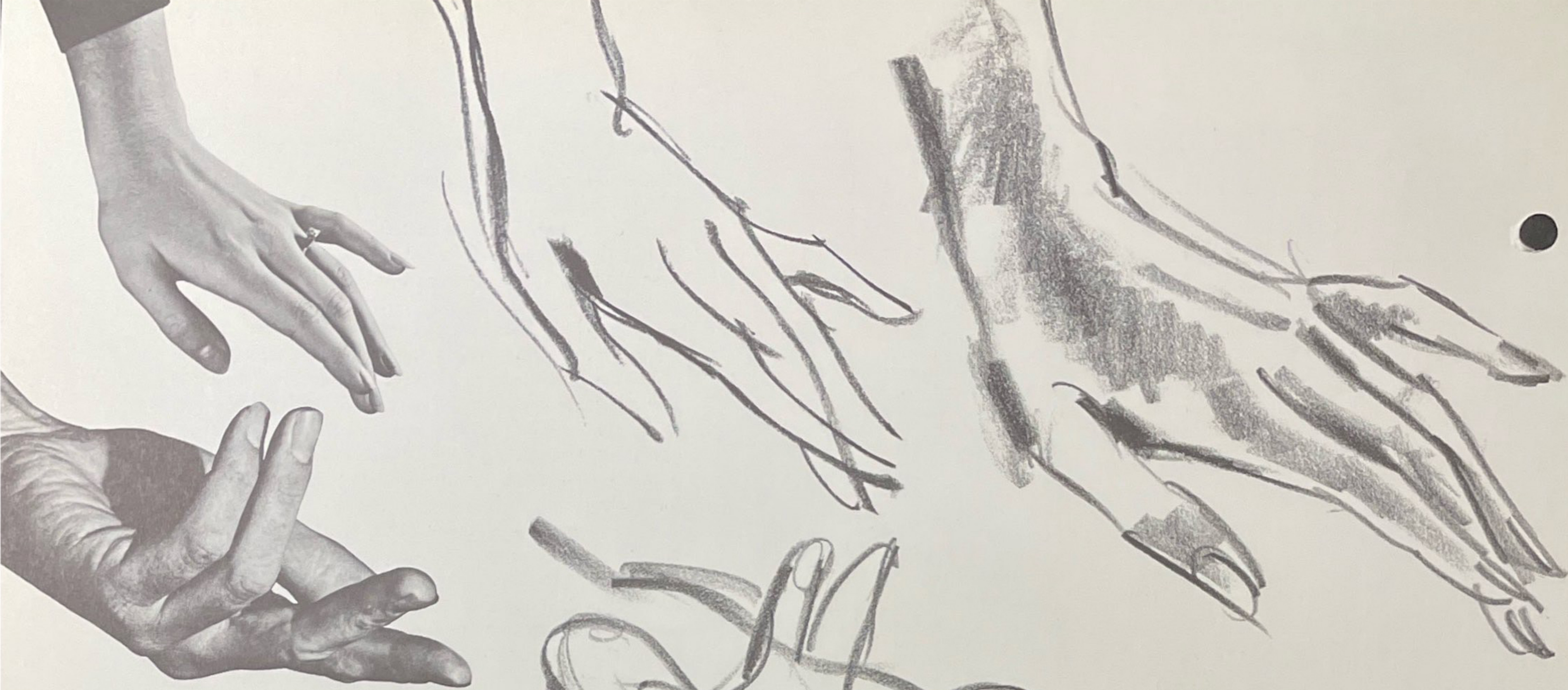
*The Miracle*, Marino Marini  
Collection of Emilio Jesi, Milan

*Portrait of Hermann Haller*, Marino Marini  
Kunsthhaus, Zurich

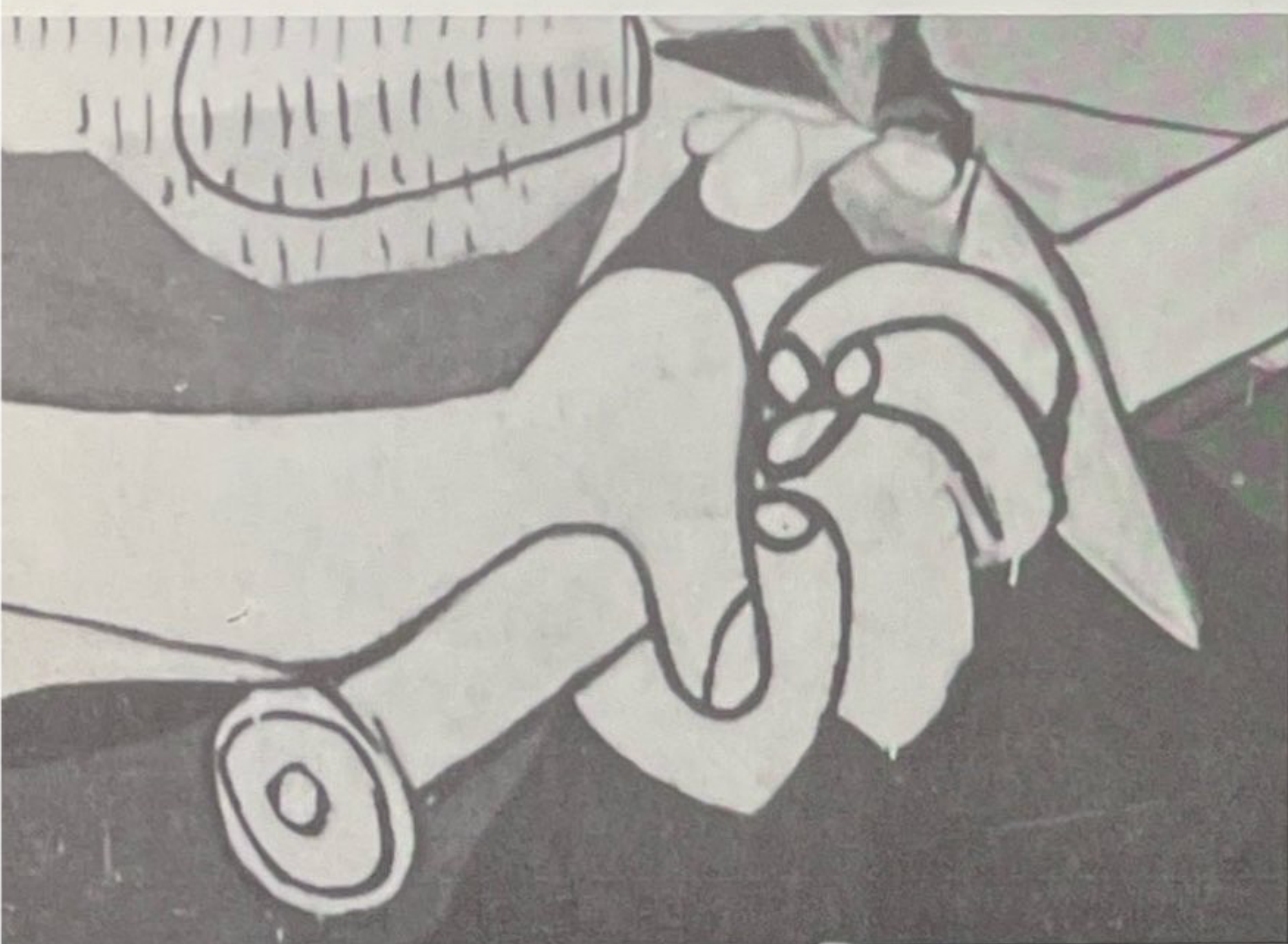
*Head of Stravinsky*, Marino Marini  
San Francisco Museum of Art  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Haas







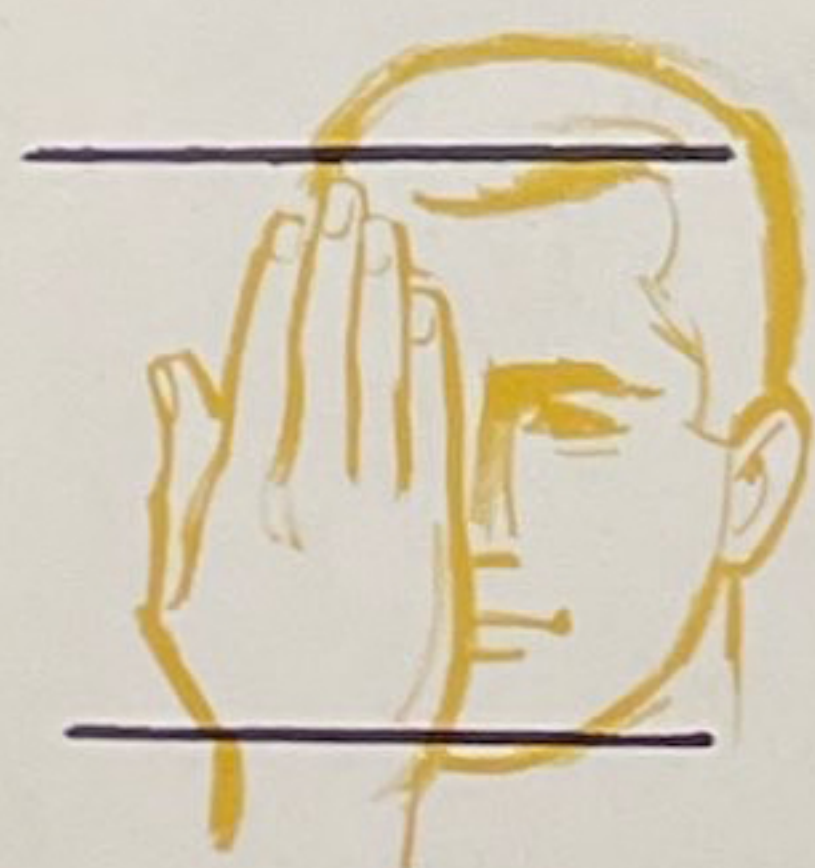
All hands have a characteristic gesture, even when they're still. As you begin to draw hands, try to catch their gestures first. Then draw some hands in more detail, using light and shadow to give them form. You'll never be without a subject, because your own hand is always there. If you're right handed, draw your left hand from as many different angles as you can manage, in different positions, doing different things. Then, if you look at it in a mirror, the image will be reversed and you can start all over, drawing it as if it were your right hand.



*Guernica*, 1937, Detail  
On extended loan to the Museum of Modern Art, New York, from the artist



Below are some points for you to look for when you draw hands. Use them only as guides, not rules. It's important to be able to draw hands truly, more important to get into your drawing what you want those hands to do or say or be.



Hands are about the same length as the face, from the chin to the hairline.



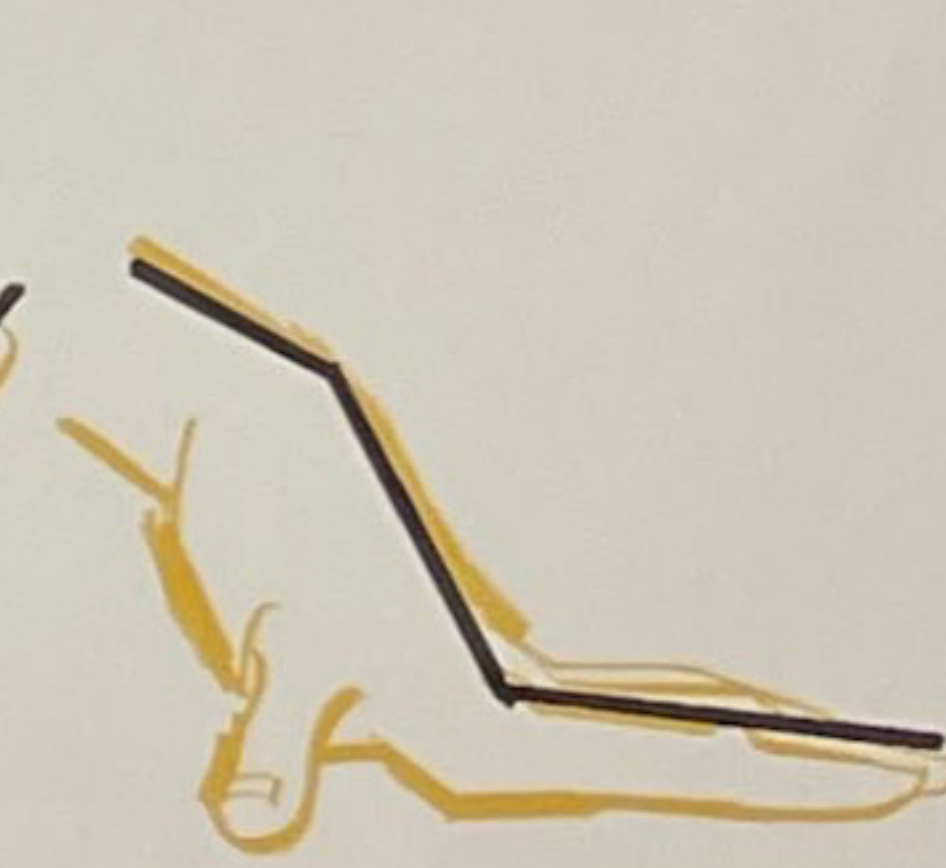
The palm is longer on the thumb side.



The fingers usually vary this way in length.



The wrist is solid. Think of this solid form as you draw it.



Study the way your hand moves. How far can it bend to the sides? How far will the fingers spread? Look at your hand and draw it in all of its positions.



## Expressive hands

Have you ever tried to explain something, or tell about an exciting happening with your hands behind your back? Try it if you haven't. It will make you realize how much your hands talk for you. Next to the face, hands are the most expressive part of the body.

Because hands tell us so much, artists use them to help convey meaning in their pictures. The hands in two of the illustrations on these pages were created by the same artist — Picasso. They're planets apart in feeling, but equally eloquent in what they are saying. What could be more feminine, gentle, more protective than the hands of the mother in the drawing at right? They envelop a still, tiny world of security and love. Now look at the hand in the detail from *Guernica* at far left on the facing page. Here are strength, hatred and fear, caught in one grip around the handle of a mortal weapon. So expressive are Picasso's hands, they need no words, no props, to tell us what they have to say.

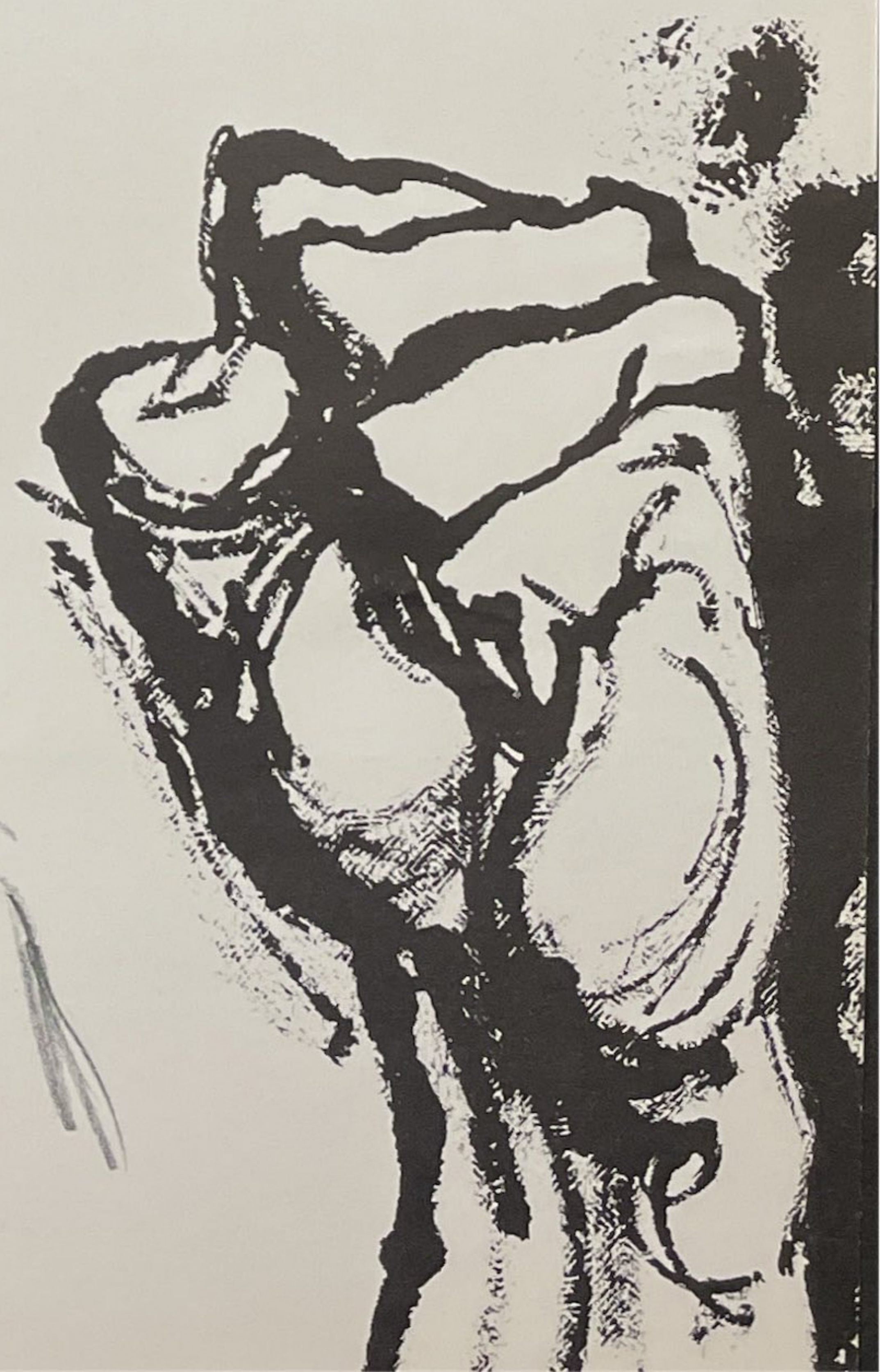
Practice drawing hands from all angles, in all sizes, all ages. Learn to let them speak for you in your art.



*A Mother Holding a Child and Four Studies of Her Right Hand, Detail*  
Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University  
Bequest of Meta and Paul J. Sachs



Hands not only reveal the sex of a person, they tell if he is young or old and may even suggest his build and temperament. A lifetime is written in the wrinkles and callouses of the weathered old hand at left. The fist at right might belong to a young man, strong and determined. Watch hands. They are the counterpart to what you read in people's faces.







Muted colors, a rhythmic flow of light and dark about the head, simple curving shapes which define the main forms while blurring distracting detail — all help create the spirit of quiet and repose that pervades this gentle portrait.

*Head of a Young Woman*, Edgar Degas  
Louvre, Paris



## The portrait

A portrait, if it is a work of art, is more than a pleasing likeness. It reveals something of the person who lives (and sometimes hides) behind the face we see on canvas. What we see through those features may be repose or torment, sadness, excitement, strength or fear. It may be the quiet contentment of a young girl, the guileless trust of a child. It doesn't have to be a major emotion — or even an emotion at all — but an expressive quality that makes us sense the presence of a living person, unique and individual, looking out at us from the canvas.

An artist may give this touch of life to a portrait in obvious or subtle ways. The set of the mouth, the bend of the shoulders, the angle of the head, the depth of a frown or the turn of a smile can hold the key. Colors, costumes, even brushstrokes help convey mood and temperament. As you study portraits, you may sometimes be unable to decide *what* it is that brings the painting to life. In that case, it might be as Matisse said: "Expression, to my way of thinking, does not consist of the passion mirrored upon a human face or betrayed by a violent gesture. The whole arrangement of my picture is expressive."

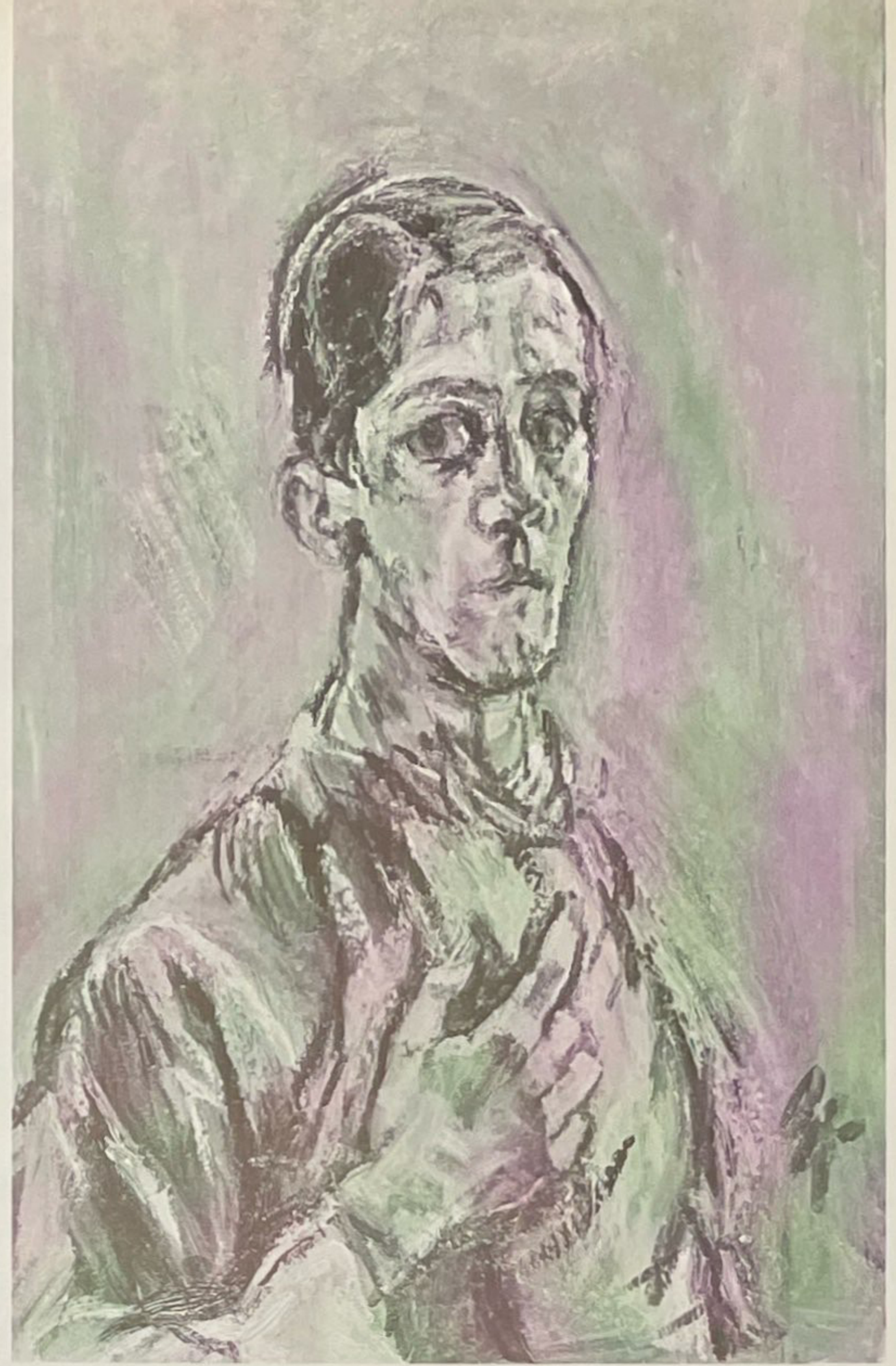
As you begin to paint portraits, choose as your subjects people you already know and like — perhaps a brother or sister or a friend. If you paint someone you don't know very well, you should still have an interest in your subject and find something you want to say about him (or her). If you don't, it will show. What you see or know or feel about the person you put on canvas will be just as important in the finished painting as the length you make his nose and the color of his hair.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
Bequest of Gertrude Stein, 1946

Picasso painted this portrait of his friend Gertrude Stein in 1906. By her account she sat for him ninety times. Then he put the painting aside and, after many months, painted in the face from memory. Can you see a difference in style between the rounded forms of the body and the more chiseled, sculptural quality of the face? By the time he finished this portrait, Picasso was moving toward a means of expression which would introduce a new name to art: cubism.

Self Portrait, Oskar Kokoschka  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York Purchase



Expressionists like Kokoschka attempted to make visible, in paint, man's inward, most private conflicts and emotions. No wonder, then, that they often used themselves as subjects for their powerfully expressive portraits.

DeKooning is a leading abstract expressionist. He and other contemporary painters who are grouped under that name are as relentlessly, vigorously self-expressive as Kokoschka, but usually work more abstractly. While this portrait is certainly not a literal likeness, it conveys as strongly as the others the presence of a real living person.

Portrait of Jack Greenbaum  
Collection: Allan Stone Gallery, New York







## Paint a portrait in oil

Have you ever tried to paint a portrait? It's great fun to try to capture another person on canvas, but it isn't easy. Don't be too disappointed if your painting doesn't turn out to be a marvelous likeness. You'll come closer next time.

You'll have better results if you spend some time getting ready. First, pick your subject carefully. Choose someone you like — and someone who likes *you* well enough to sit still for you for a long time. Let's assume that you choose a girl.

Before you decide how you want her to pose, think about her a little bit. What is it that makes her different from everybody else? Watch the way she moves. How does she most naturally sit? As you talk to her, observe her expressions. Think about her most typical moods, her posture, her dress.

It's important that she look like her natural self when you paint her. She may usually wear casual clothes, but show up to sit for you looking as if she's all ready for a party. Don't let her do that. You won't get a truthful likeness if you do. Of course, if she really always looks dressed up, that's the way she should look in your painting.

These photographs show the subject of our portrait in many different positions and moods. The artist who painted her chose a quiet, pensive pose because he decided, after talking to her and watching the way she moved and the expressions that played over her face, that this was a typical attitude for her and one that particularly appealed to him.

## Try different color schemes

First of all, try several small sketches in oil on heavy paper to find the color scheme you want. Indicate the main shapes and the position of your model in each of them, but don't worry about details. Our artist, after experimenting with a number of different palettes, including the very warm one at left, chose a cool color scheme because it seemed to best fit the mood of his model and because it harmonized so well with the tones of her skin.







As you begin, be sure that you are close enough to your model to see the colors in her face. Pose her comfortably in good light, arrange your palette, and you're ready for the first step—laying in the background.



### 1 Draw in the head

Tone your canvas with a very thin wash, then begin your sketch. Don't attempt to make a "nice drawing" here—just establish the main shapes and place the features correctly.



### 2 Begin the lay-in

Lay in your large masses of color first, with a big brush. A No. 6 long flat bristle would be fine. Notice there is no attempt to paint facial details yet. The strokes of paint on the face establish approximate value and color relationships between the flesh and the darker tones around it. Don't carry the face very far along before you begin to work into the hair and sweater. Because each part of the painting relates to all the others, it's a good idea to keep the whole work progressing at the same rate.



### 3 Continue the lay-in

Keep comparing one area of the flesh to another for variations in value and color. Don't approach your painting as if you were mixing a single skin tone to apply to the face like makeup. Remember, you're painting the illusion of your model at a specific moment in time as she sits in a definite kind of light coming from a particular direction. *Paint what you see.* The edges where dark and light come together need to be softened a little, but don't lose them. Value contrasts are necessary to describe the planes of the face. Don't just paint the features on. Here the surrounding tones are worked into the eye, nose and mouth to avoid a false, painted-on look.





#### 4 Refine the painting

Now study the face very critically and make whatever changes you think are necessary, possibly in the drawing or placement of the features, or in the colors or values. Don't fiddle too much with a niggling problem, though. It's really better to scrape off an entire nose or eye or mouth with a palette knife and start afresh. Often, in the scraping, the problem will be easier to see and correct.

Be particularly careful when you paint the white part of the eye. If you, like most beginners, have a tendency to make this little area too light, try painting it with flesh tones first, and then carefully make it lighter with touches of white.

Now that our portrait is almost finished, you can see (*above*) that the pattern of colors and values hasn't changed very much—most of the tones are still arranged as they were in the beginning color sketch.

#### 5 Finish the portrait

Now take some time to stand back and look at your whole composition. How can you improve it? It's always possible to change an oil painting, as you know. Don't be afraid to make even big changes if you think they're needed now. At right is our finished portrait. You can see that the artist decided to change his background, making it darker to give more contrast to the face. If you aren't satisfied with the background of your painting, work on it some more, until you find the tones that you think complement your subject best.

Now your portrait is finished. If the head is well drawn and the likeness is there, you should be very pleased. It may be that you've even captured something of your model's personality as well. That is what breathes life into a portrait; it's what makes this difficult art of portrait painting worth all the trial and effort it demands.







# Gallery

## Heads and hands in art

Some of the heads and hands on these pages were painted from life, others from the artist's imagination. You may like some more than others, but study them all closely to see what they express and how they express it, and notice that each is stamped with the style of the man who painted it.



*Portrait of Louis Guillaume*  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
Chester Dale Collection

Here, Cézanne saw and painted a gentle face that looked at him with two enormously dark, wistful eyes. Notice how he has kept the background low in value and simplified the forms of the boy's jacket and hair with deeply shaded tones to give prominence to the pale face, which, in turn, sets off the most revealing feature of all — the eyes.



*Laughing Heads*  
Esnault-Pelterie, Paris



Daumier's pen felt out and delineated the forms and features of these heads with many searching lines. Here, as in much of this artist's freely drawn works, his searching for the gesture is a visible part of the finished drawing.

*Portrait of Mateo Alegria*  
Henry Pearlman Foundation



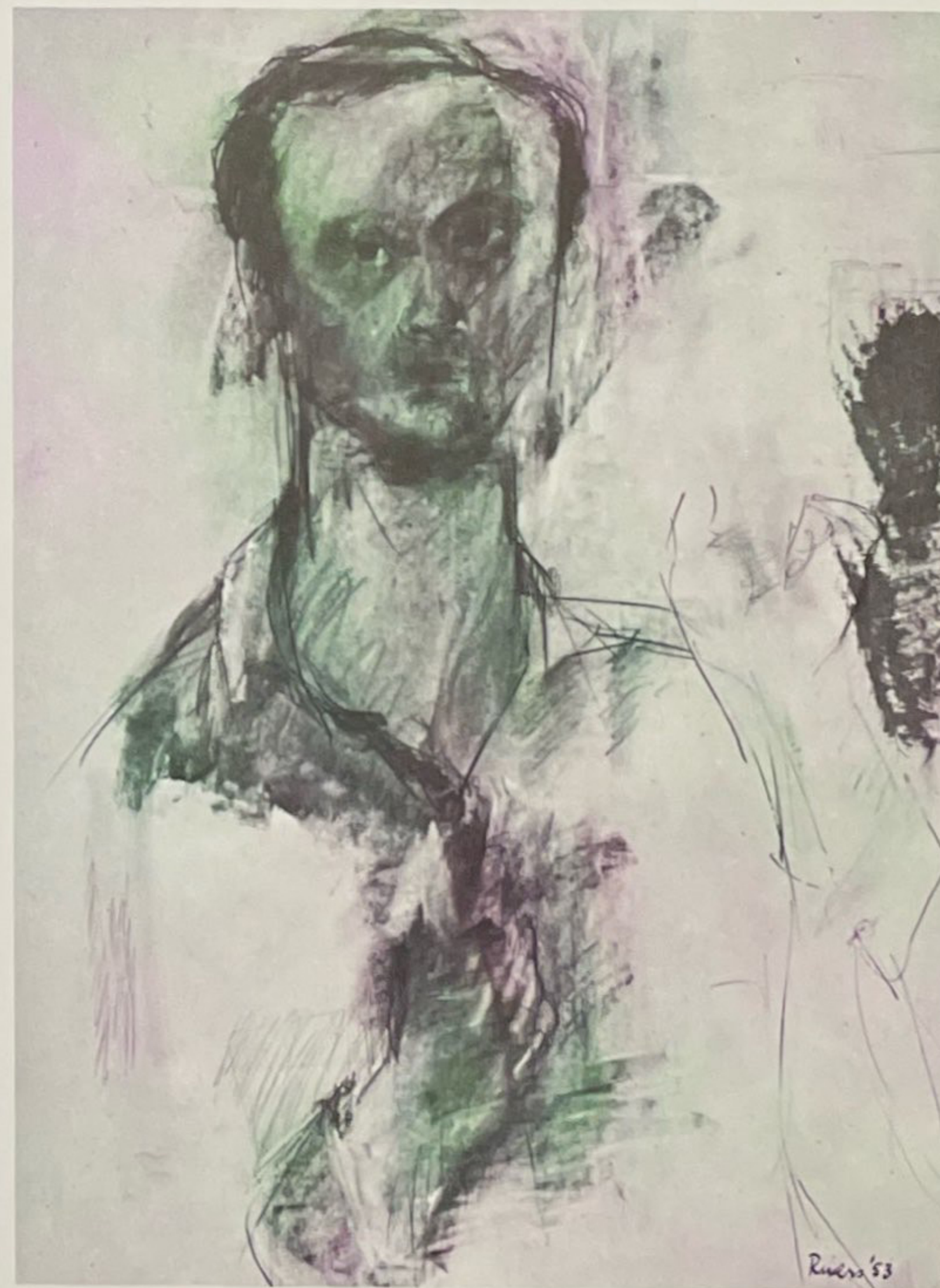
Modigliani, an Italian artist who worked in France at the beginning of the century, used only heads and figures as his subjects. Each face is that of a remarkably singular individual, even though he gave all of them, sculpture and painting alike, his own stylized, elongated faces, long thin noses and slanty, almond eyes.

*Study of a Woman's Hands*  
Reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
The Royal Library, Windsor Castle



In this study, Da Vinci created two beautifully modeled hands with hundreds of precise, delicate lines. He used line, too, to suggest the form of the arms inside the sleeves. You can see that he first cradled the right hand in the left, then drew the right hand over again above, more completely detailed.

*Self Portrait* The Art Institute of Chicago  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Bergman



Larry Rivers, a successful jazz musician before he became an artist, studied with the abstract expressionist Hans Hofmann. While his paintings are partly abstract, they usually center on a recognizable subject — in this case, himself. This painting shows a mark of his style — the most important and most expressive areas (the head and hand) are more fully developed than the others. This approach may give an unfinished look to the picture, but as you study it you'll find that it really is a carefully weighed and balanced composition.

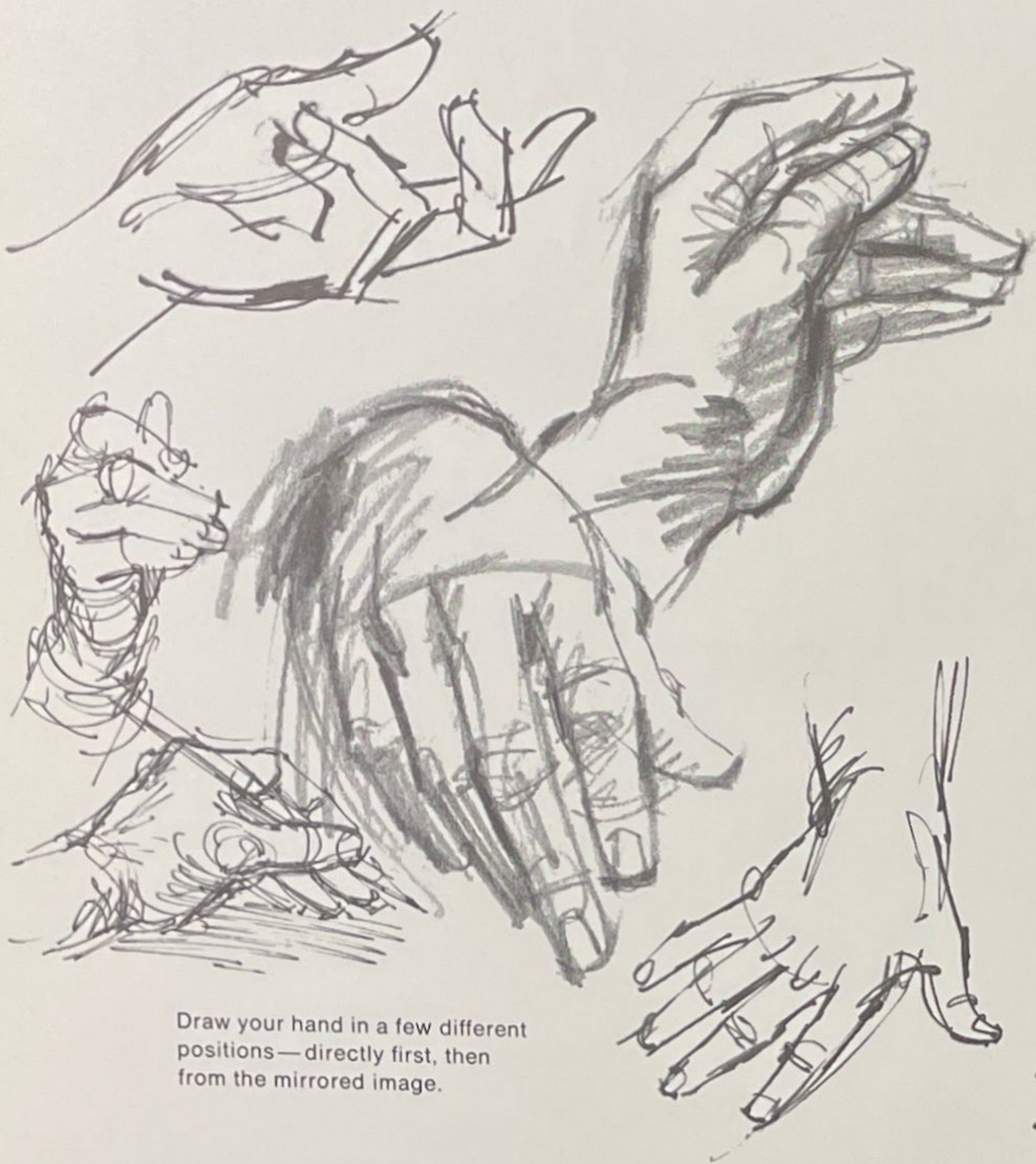




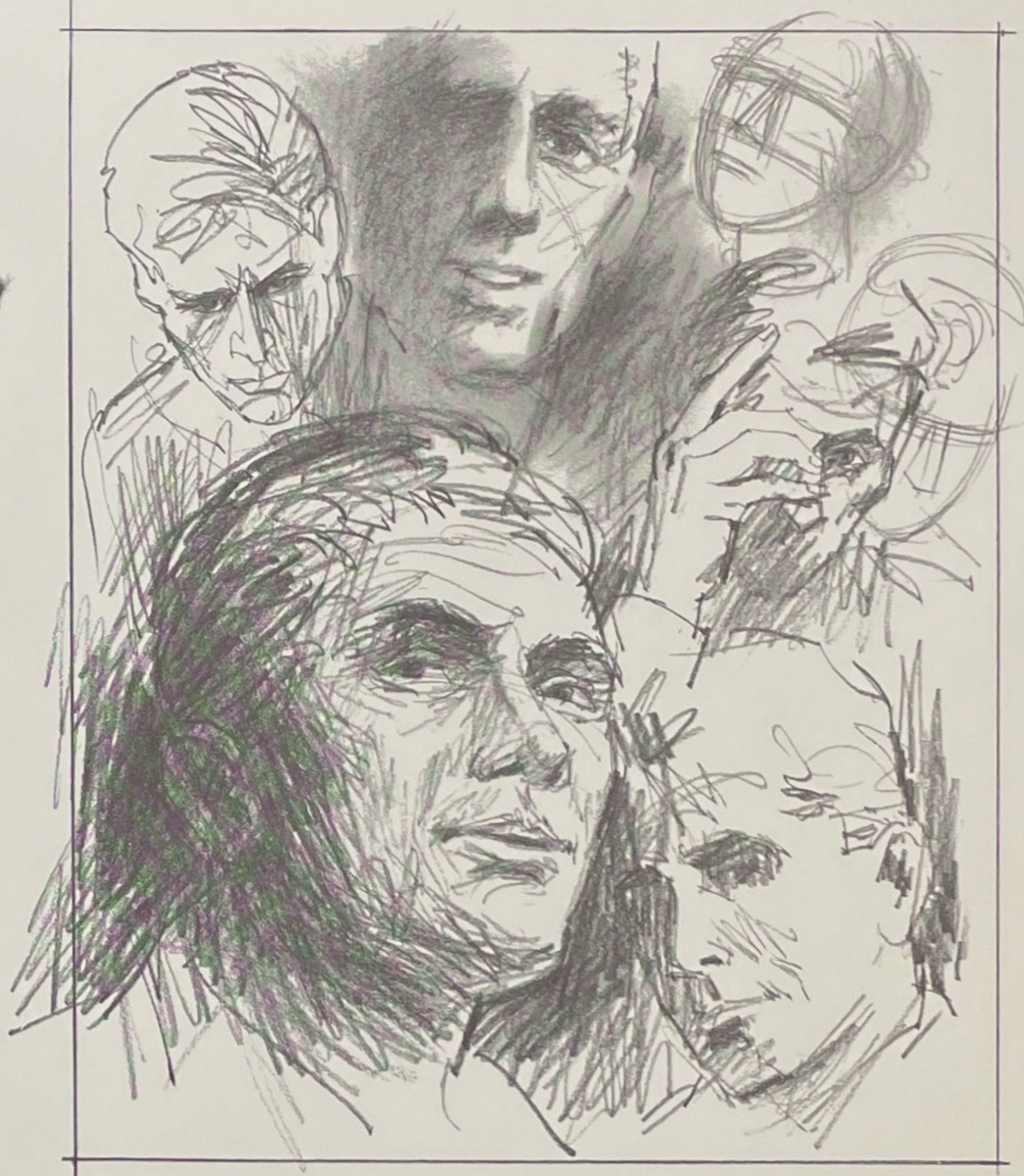
## Be your own model

There's one person who will always be happy to pose for you whenever you want to draw. That's you. All you need to do is look into a mirror and there's your model ready to take any pose, show any emotion, even make faces if that's what you want to draw. Concentrate on just your head and hands for now.

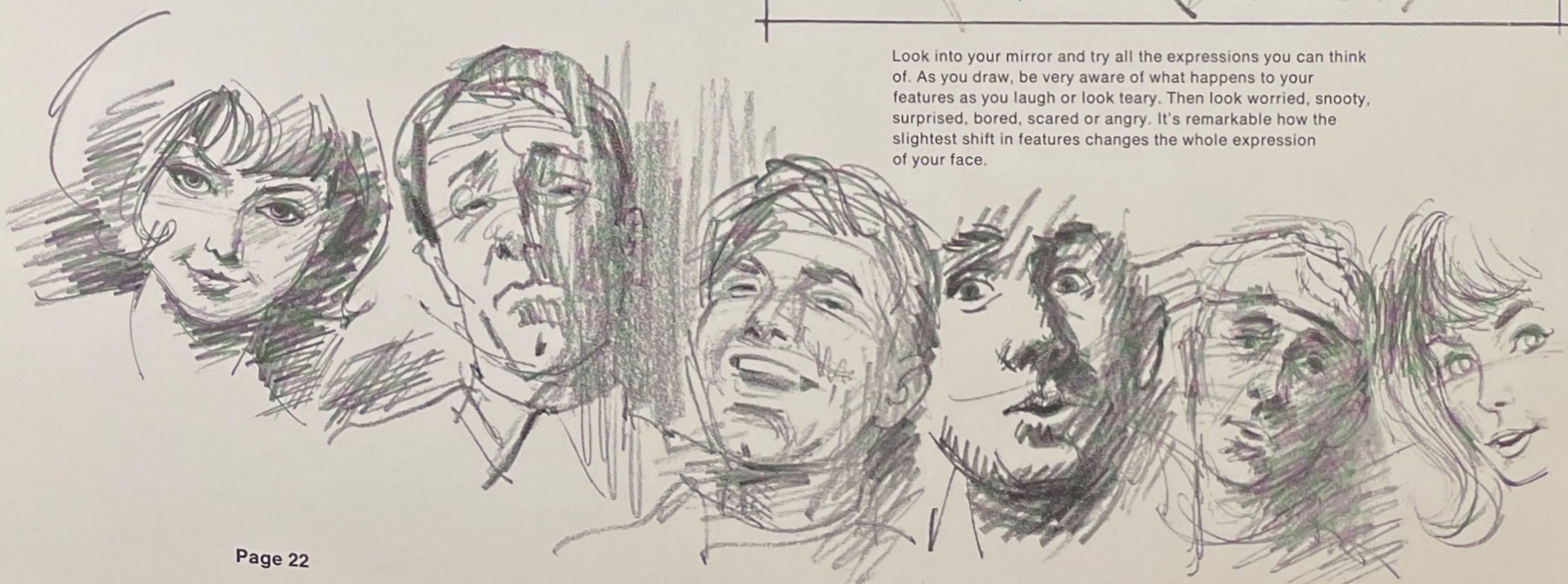
Try tilting your head back a little and sketch it from that angle. Then look down and sketch it again in this position. Try a three-quarter view. The mirror is particularly helpful in showing you exactly what happens to the position and shape of the features as the head moves. Leonardo da Vinci said, "The mirror, above all — the mirror is our teacher." He said that almost five hundred years ago, and it's still just as true.



Draw your hand in a few different positions — directly first, then from the mirrored image.



Look into your mirror and try all the expressions you can think of. As you draw, be very aware of what happens to your features as you laugh or look teary. Then look worried, snooty, surprised, bored, scared or angry. It's remarkable how the slightest shift in features changes the whole expression of your face.





# Assignment Section 8 Heads, hands and portraits

## Important

These instructions are extremely important to you. Read them through carefully from start to finish. Do your assignment work only after you have done the practice exercises in Section 8. Pay particular attention to the projects on pages 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, and 22. Do not send these exercises to the School unless directed to do so in your assignment instructions below.

"In portrait painting [the artist must] put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that day—to paint the man, in short, as well as his features." *James McNeill Whistler*

## To send to the School

### Practice project

While you were studying this section, and as part of your practice work for it, you should have made many drawings of heads and hands. Select any *two* of your drawings of a head that best represent your impression of the model. Select any *two* of your drawings of hands that you feel express some meaning to you.

You may fold any of these drawings if they are too large for your mailing carton. Mail these four drawings to the School along with your assignment work.

### Section 8 assignment painting

In either oil or watercolor on a 16 x 20-inch sheet of Canvaskin or 15 x 20-inch sheet of watercolor paper, paint a *por-*

*trait*. Leave at least a 1-inch border all around your picture. You may use one of your parents or a friend as a model, or you may paint a self-portrait, if you wish, by looking at yourself in a mirror as you paint. In any case, work directly from life—do not work from a photograph. Keep in mind that an exact likeness is not the important thing in this assignment. Try to capture the feeling and character of your subject.

Print on the back of your practice drawings and your assignment picture:

Your name  
Student number  
Address  
Assignment number

(over, please)

Cut along this line—and mail with your assignment

## Section 8 Heads, hands and portraits

### Comment sheet

In the space below write a few lines telling us how you felt about this assignment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name ..... Student number .....

Date .....



### **Check before mailing**

Your assignment carton should contain:

- 2 drawings of heads
- 2 drawings of hands
- 1 portrait painting in oil or watercolor on a 16 x 20-inch sheet of Canvaskin or 15 x 20-inch watercolor paper
- 1 comment sheet (on other side of this page)
- 1 shipping label filled out completely with your name and address

Mail this carton to:

**Famous Artists School**  
**Westport, Connecticut 06880**

Note: Be *sure* your painting is dry before mailing.